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CHAPEL-TALKS
AND
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ADDRESSES

ONE HUNDRED CHAPEL-TALKS TO THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

TOGETHER WITH

TWO AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ADDRESSES

BY

AUGUSTUS HOPKINS STRONG

PRESIDENT EMERITUS OF THE ROCHESTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
AUTHOR OF "SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY," "PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION," "THE GREAT POETS AND THEIR THEOLOGY" "CHRIST IN CREATION," AND "MISCELLANIES"

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PREFACE

THE Rochester Theological Seminary has for more than thirty years held a daily noon prayer meeting of from fifteen to twenty minutes in length. Both professors and students have attended it, and have taken part in it. It has become an important influence in seminary life, and all the more, because of its brevity and informality. To my great surprise, at the close of my fortieth and final year of service as President of the Institution, I was presented with a stenographic and typewritten copy of the talks I had made in this meeting during the preceding twelvemonth, and it was suggested that I should put them into print. These reports had been taken entirely without my knowledge, and I discovered colloquialisms which needed correction. I concluded, however, to make the needed corrections, and to add a few talks of former years. I now present these printed addresses to a wider public, with the hope that they may suggest useful lines of thought, both to my recent pupils and to others.

The two longer addresses which I have prefixed to the hundred chapel-talks may serve as an autobiographical introduction. The first of them was delivered upon the occasion of the unveiling of a bronze

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bust of the author, which the Alumni of the Seminary had procured and had set up in its library. The second of these addresses was given at a banquet of seminary students and professors, which was tendered to the author near the close of his work as President and Professor of Theology. The nature of these occasions may explain some of my allusions; and the facts of my autobiography may in turn explain some of the chapel-talks which follow. I present this volume to my former students, with the confidence that they, at any rate, will not think less of the book because it is so personal.

Augustus H. Strong.

Rochester, January 1, 1913.

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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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I

THEOLOGY AND EXPERIENCE[1]

Words fail me, Doctor Burton, to express my sense of the graciousness of your introduction, and of the kindness of the alumni whom you represent. Who am I, and what is my father's house, that I should receive such honor as this? The eight hundred pupils who have been under my instruction, and who are now scattered to the ends of the earth, are doing great and blessed work for Christ and his truth, and I am profoundly thankful that I have been able to teach them. But they are full of their own cares and burdens; it is a wonder that they remember me, and that they contribute to this memorial. This is my reward here and now, though I had not expected any part of my reward on earth.

It is said of Crœsus, king of Lydia and reputed the richest man on earth in ancient times, that he showed his treasures to Solon, the lawgiver of Greece, and declared himself a happy man. But Solon replied, "Account no man happy before he dies." I am not yet dead; or, if I am, as the native of Erin said, "I am not conscious of it." But I cannot refrain from calling myself happy. In spite of many labors and

[1] An address delivered January 13, 1913, at the unveiling of a bronze bust of the author, presented to the Rochester Theological Seminary by the Alumni, to commemorate the completion of his fortieth year of service as President and Professor of Systematic Theology, Reuben E. Burton, D. D., for the Alumni making the presentation, and Dean J. W. A. Stewart, D. D., for the Seminary accepting the gift.

some trials, I have had a happy life. I have had friends and daily bread and honest work to do. Above all, I have lived my regenerate life under the shadow of Christ's cross, and I have had Christ himself for my Counselor.

I hope to spend what remains of life under the shadow of that same cross, "until the day dawn and the shadows flee away." And if, when I have departed, the portrait in bronze which you have presented to the Seminary will incite any who knew me to greater faithfulness in proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ, it will be the best of all rewards for me. I beg you, Doctor Burton, to give my most humble and hearty thanks to the dear brethren who have subscribed for this memorial, and to assure them that I shall hold them in everlasting remembrance.

And yet, on this occasion that can never come again, I am expected to say something more. I ought, indeed, to say something significant, and to bring you some special message. I come with hesitation, because I have no message except the message of my personal religious experience. My subject therefore will be, "Theology and Experience." Example speaks louder than precept, and if I can show you how my views of evangelical doctrine have been necessarily determined by the circumstances of my individual history, I shall render you the best service of which I am capable. And yet there are difficulties attending such a narration. My religious history is so interwoven with my secular history, that it will be impossible to relate the one without also relating the other. I run the risk of both garrulity and egotism. If I inflict either

one of these upon you, I beg you to remember that I do it for your good, and that I do it with the intent, at least, not to exploit myself, but to honor Christ, our Lord. Before we go further, let us ask his special blessing:

O Lord Jesus, who art with us alway according to thy promise, who hast bidden all who labor and are heavy laden to come to thee with the assurance that thou wilt not cast them out, and who hast said that thou wilt give thy greatest and best gift, the Holy Spirit, to those who simply ask, we pray that thou wilt fulfil thy promise to us to-night, both to him who speaks and to those who hear, that the words of our lips and the meditations of our hearts may be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer, for thy name's sake. Amen.

I was born and bred in a Christian household. The very first religious impression that I received was on a certain Saturday afternoon, at the age of six years, when my dear mother, after her work was done, took me into a large and dimly lighted closet, where we knelt together by an old oaken chest, and where she taught me, or tried to teach me, to pray. When words failed me, she put the words into my mouth, and I never shall forget how her hot tears came down upon my upturned face when I succeeded in offering the first prayer of my own to God. I have always made it my illustration of the work of the Holy Spirit, who "when we know not what to pray for as we ought, helps our infirmities and makes intercession for us" and in us.

At the age of ten I waked on a Sabbath morning amid a howling snow-storm. I looked out of the window and saw that the drifts were like Alps in the street. I came down in great glee to my father, and

I said, "Father, there will be no church to-day." He said, "My son, why not?" and I said, "Why, there'll be nobody there." "Well," said he, "if there is nobody else there, it will be very important that we should be there." So he trotted me all the way through the snow-drifts, and there were only seven persons present. We had a prayer meeting, *quorum magnaque pars fui,* and never since that time have I been able to be quite comfortable away from church on a Sunday morning.

On the thirty-first of December, when I was twelve years of age, the panorama of my sins seemed to roll before me. I felt that the record of all my past, sealed up forever, to be brought against me in the Judgment, was more than I could bear; and I made resolutions to begin the very next morning a Christian life. But the festivities of New Year's Day banished the resolutions from my mind, and I had no conviction of sin for quite a number of years afterward.

My intellectual awakening occurred when I was fourteen years of age. I had begun the study of Latin. I had read through the exercises of the Latin Reader, and had mastered, as I supposed, the declensions and conjugations. Just then the spring vacation occurred, and an older student, who made his living by sweeping the floors and ringing the bell of the academy, proposed to me and to my cousin that we should spend the three weeks of the spring vacation in reading Latin by ourselves. My cousin declined the invitation. He proposed to spend his time in quite a different way and to make it a play-spell, but I concluded that I would yield; and during those three weeks I rose at

five in the morning, and with some intervals I studied Latin until ten o'clock at night. At the end of those three weeks I and this older student had gone over the whole Latin Reader, fables and history and whatever else was there, and on presenting the record of what we had done to the principal of the school, he said at once: "Why, you can skip a year, and go into the Cicero class." That was the first time in my life when I came to the conclusion that, if I tried, I could do something in the world. The principal was a man who was guiltless of grammar—that is, comparatively speaking—but he was a great lover of the Latin and Greek classics, and he infected me with his own strong interest. Under his tutelage, or apart from him, before I was sixteen years of age, I had read the whole of Virgil's Æneid, together with the Georgics and Bucolics, and a very large portion of the Odes of Horace; three books of Herodotus, the Prometheus of Æschylus; and I had written out a translation, which I still possess, of the Clouds of Aristophanes.

My father thought that I was too young to go to college, and so he took me into his counting-room. He was the proprietor of the *Rochester Daily Democrat;* and in that counting-room, in a year and a half, I learned to keep all the books of the establishment by double entry; I learned to set type; I learned to read proof; I learned to take telegraph reports from the dictation of the telegraph operator. In the counting-room, which was a place of exchange for all the news of Western New York, my father probably having the largest acquaintance with men of any single man in

Rochester, there were all kinds of discussions, sometimes hot discussions, with regard to the candidacy of Henry Clay for the presidency, the laying of the Atlantic Cable, the prospects of the wheat crop in the Genesee Valley, and, strange to say, the differences between the Old School and the New School Presbyterians.

My father thought it very desirable that I should have a large amount of reading. The booksellers used to send in to us the books which they desired to have reviewed, and I had the privilege of taking home whichever of those books suited my fancy. The result was that I took home the complete works of Lord Bacon, the Essays of Macaulay and of De Quincey, Milton's "Paradise Lost," and the Poems of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

I might say that up to that time all my literary attainments had been built upon a foundation of dime novels. The "Phantom Ship," the "Pirate's Bride," and literature of that stamp had engaged my attention. Even in that there was an occasional quotation from a poet, or an allusion to history; and I have made up my mind, since that time, that it does not make so much difference what a man reads, so long as he has in him the love for reading. Before I went to college I had read through the six volumes of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," and works of like character, such as Robertson's "History of Charles the Fifth." Then I joined a debating society, and whatever ability I have ever had of thinking and speaking on my feet is due, I think, to the practice that I gained in that society of older men.

My father thought it necessary that I should have a knowledge of the world. So he sent me to the Albany State Fair, and to Niagara Falls to take a journey across the river in the little car that was suspended between heaven and earth on a single cable in preparation for the building of the Suspension Bridge. He also sent me to the Courts. I heard a whole murder trial from beginning to end; heard the sentence passed upon the convicted criminal; and then, I regret to say, my father sent me to the jail to see the man hanged.

I mention all of these exploits, not for the purpose of showing to you how much I myself did, but because of what followed. I went to Yale convinced that I was going to stand first in every respect. I was full of pride and full of ambition, but my pride and my ambition collapsed like a bubble at the first recitation in Homer's Iliad. Prof. James Hadley, the father of President Hadley, gave out, as a lesson for the first recitation of the term, four lines of Homer's Iliad. I smiled; but I wept afterward, for Professor Hadley called up an Andover man to recite. I think he put fifty questions on those first four lines, and the very meaning of those questions I did not know. The "analysis of the verb"? I never knew there was any analysis of the verb. My instructor had never given me information with regard to such matters. All my expectations of scholarship were dashed in a moment, and I made up my mind that I must devote my college course to something else.

My dear friends, I have a Phi Beta Kappa key, and I got through the course fairly well as to scholarship. But I did not put upon the studies of the course

the main strength of my mind and my heart. I devoted myself to reading, writing, and speaking. I took pretty much everything in the way of prizes that there were to take, from the prize compositions in the freshman year to the De Forest gold medal in the senior year; so that, after all, with the investigation that I gave to the subjects for prize debates, my time was by no means thrown away. Yet I now regret that I did not put my heart and mind more fully into the studies of the curriculum.

All that I have said with regard to these studies is only preliminary to my showing you what the effect was upon my religious life. Concluding that devotion to scholarship was not the thing for me, I fell into irregular habits and associations; and, if I had religious thoughts and ideas at all at the beginning of my college course, I lost them very speedily after that course began. In my ungodly and half-dissipated course I was a model of merely selfish and worldly ambition. I was never intoxicated in my life, but I was on the verge of evil; I knew that if I went very much farther I would be damned; and yet, until just before the spring vacation in my junior year, no single man in my class and no single man in college ever said one word to me about the subject of religion. But one afternoon I was standing, when the south wind was blowing in the month of March, in front of the college chapel, and the college bell was ringing for evening prayers. A hand was laid upon my shoulder. I looked around, and saw a man who for two years and a half had sat next to me in the recitation-room. It was Wilder Smith. Evidently something was agita-

ting him, for the muscles of his face were twitching, and as I looked into his face, he said, "O Strong, I wish you were a Christian!" And then the bell stopped ringing, and we both had to rush in to evening prayers. But that one word never left me until I gave my heart to God. I have often thought how little a thing will sometimes turn the whole current of a man's life. For me that was the parting of the ways; that one word was my salvation.

I must anticipate in my story, and tell you the result. Both Wilder Smith and I studied for the ministry, and we both became pastors of churches. After I had settled in the eastern part of Massachusetts, I heard that he was to make a visit within a short distance of my home, and I invited him to come and spend Sunday with me. I told him that he could preach in the morning and I in the afternoon. All the while I had it in my mind to tell Wilder Smith what he had done for me, for I had never mentioned the matter to him, and we had never had any conversation on the subject.

So, after the afternoon service, I took Wilder Smith home with me. We sat down in the parlor, and I said: "Wilder, do you know that you did me the greatest service that ever was done for me by any mortal man?" "Why, no," said he; "what do you mean?" I said: "Don't you remember how, one afternoon in March, in front of the college chapel, you put your hand on my shoulder and said, 'Strong, I wish that you were a Christian'?" "Why, no," said he; "did I?" He had forgotten all about it. I suppose he had said the same thing to others, and that this was only one of a great many good words that he had

spoken during his college course. It had utterly gone from him. He will be like the righteous going up before the judgment-seat of Christ and saying: "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered? when did we do anything that was worthy of this great reward?" He had forgotten; but God had not forgotten; nor had I.

When the spring vacation began I went home. I reached my father's house late in the afternoon. I had just time to sit down to the supper-table with my parents and with a young lady cousin who was visiting with us at the time. Curiously enough, this cousin said: "Won't you go with us to the meeting to-night to hear Charles G. Finney, the great evangelist? He is going to preach." Well, I knew that Charles G. Finney had come to Rochester twenty-six years before, and that my father had been converted under his preaching, and I had myself heard him preach in Oberlin, Ohio. I had no particular thought with regard to my own duty, but I went to that Presbyterian church, and I sat in the middle of the great congregation, the aisles being packed with seats. I do not remember what the sermon was, but I do remember that great, stalwart man standing up at the close of the service, with his eyes fixed apparently upon me, and saying: "If there is any one in this congregation who thinks he ought to begin to serve God, let him rise out of his place and go down the aisle into the basement. There will be some ministers there who will talk with him on the subject of religion." It was like a thunderbolt to me. I did not expect anything like that. But I somehow felt that my hour had come. I turned to my cousin and said, "Can you get home

alone?" She was glad enough to say, "Yes." I got up from my place and started down the aisle. There were about fifty others that had come in, and the pastor of that Presbyterian church, Doctor Ellinwood, to whom I shall always be grateful, came and sat down by my side. He said: "I see you have some feeling on the subject of religion." "No," said I, "I have none at all." "What?" said he, "how does it happen that you are here?" I said: "I have no feeling at all; I simply know that I ought to begin a Christian life; but I do not know how to begin." "Well," he said, "will you begin a Christian life now; will you begin to serve God now?" "Oh!" said I, "that is a very large contract to take; I don't know what it means to be a Christian; and I don't know how to begin."

"Well," said he, "you will never have a better opportunity to make a decision than now; sometime you will have to decide the great question whether you will, or will not, serve God. Now," he said, "I will leave you for five or ten minutes, and you can settle that in your mind. I will go and talk to some one else, and I will come back and learn your decision." He went away, and I think I had the most uncomfortable ten minutes I ever had in my life. But the more I thought, the more I knew that I could not safely let that occasion pass. So, when Doctor Ellinwood returned, he said: "Will you now begin to serve God, just as well as you know how, looking to God for light, and looking to him to show you what to do?" I said, "Yes, I will." He shook hands with me; he did not pray with me. I went out into the dark;

and all the way home I said to myself: "What a confounded fool you have made of yourself to-night! You have made a promise that you do not know the meaning of; you do not know how you are ever going to keep it." I went to my room; my parents had retired to rest; but, strangely enough, my mother had put a little Bible upon the table. I said to myself: "Well, there is one thing that I ought to do; I haven't read my Bible of late; I ought to begin reading it." So I read a chapter in the Bible; it did not mean anything to me at all. Then it occurred to me that I had not prayed for a long time. "Now, you ought to form the habit of prayer." So I knelt down to pray, and tried to pray. But all was words uttered into the air, without sense or meaning. I could not think of any other duty that I had to perform except to go to bed, and I went to bed.

The next morning, as soon as I awoke, it occurred to me, "Well, you should tell your parents"; so I told them. Then it occurred to me, "You ought to tell your cousin"; so I told her. Then it occurred to me that I ought to go to the morning prayer meeting; so I went to the morning prayer meeting; there those who wanted to serve God were asked to rise, and I rose. My dear friends, I suppose I rose for prayer twenty times in those meetings before I went back to college, and every time I rose I had the same old feeling that "this is a perfectly vain struggle; I am not making anything by it; I am not getting ahead at all; there is no peace for my soul. What shall I do?" and I learned during those three weeks my first lesson in theology—the *depth and enormity of*

sin. I learned that my sinful nature was like an iceberg, seven-eighths beneath the surface of the water; seven-eighths of my being was below consciousness. It was my first lesson in theology, and it prepared me to accept from my own experience, as I afterward did, Doctor Shedd's statement that "sin is a nature and that nature is guilt." I discovered within me a coldness of heart, a lack of love, an inability to believe, that I had never suspected before. Why, I had thought I could be a Christian any time I chose. I found out that I was in the hands of God, that unless he had mercy upon me I was lost. I tried to do every duty that appeared, but the end of those three weeks came; my father and my mother went down to the train with me to see me off. When the conductor said, "All aboard," and I got up into the car, I said to myself: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved. This train is taking me to hell." Then, as I sat alone in the seat, I began to ask myself: "What is the matter? Why is it that I have no rest or peace for my soul?" It occurred to me that the trouble possibly was that I had been making an experiment of this thing; I had been saying secretly to myself that, if my effort did not succeed, I could go back again where I was before; that was not what God wanted of me. What God wanted of me was an entire and absolute consecration of my heart and life for time and eternity. Then I put my head forward on the seat before me, and I said to God: "Lord, from this time I am thine; I will live for thee, if I never have a moment of peace in my life; I will serve thee, whatever may come; I leave all the results in thy

hands." I sat up again in my seat, but I was no better off than I was before.

I went down to college; I took the key out of my pocket, opened the door of my room, and when I opened that door the first thing I saw on the mantel was a box of cigars. I stood there for a few moments riveted to the floor. Said I: "What about that? What about smoking? What about drinking?" I knew all those things; knew the associations that I had been engaged in, and I said to myself: "There is just one thing for me to do—I will cut that dog's tail off right behind his ears;" and I never smoked after that for forty years. I gave that box of cigars to my chum. That reminds me of the young woman who had a necklace that was dragging her down to hell; so she gave it to her sister. But the humor of it did not occur to me then. It was solemn business to me. But I gave up my wrong associations and wrong habits; still I was no better off than before. It occurred to me that it was my business to give my witness for God before the college and before my class. I had never been to a class prayer meeting. On a Sunday morning I appeared there. Those fellows looked askance at me, but in the middle of the meeting I arose and said: "My friends, I am not a Christian; I do not pretend anything of the sort, but I want to be; can you do anything to help me?" And they came around me and did help me from that time, and I made some of the best friends that I have had in all my life.

I declined various positions that were open to me because I thought they would interfere with my walk

with God. I tried to do my duty to my classmates, though often it was a grievous thing to do. I remember one man whom I tried to influence. I walked all the way down to the post-office with him and all the way back, thinking I would say a word to him about his soul. But I couldn't muster up courage to do it until we got back again in the shadow of the college walls, and then I said, "O Buckland, come with me, and be a Christian." Buckland broke down. All the while he had been waiting for that word. I went to Sandys' room after the Fast-day services were over and I said: "Sandys, I have come to you to talk to you about religion." Sandys said, "Do you think that I can be a Christian?" I said: "Why, yes, you can. Let us kneel down here," and within three minutes he had given his heart to God.

I went to the room right above, and the same thing was repeated with another man. And yet I was not conscious that I was myself a Christian. I had begun to read my Bible, and one afternoon, several weeks after I went back to college, I was reading by lamplight a chapter in Corinthians, where were these words: "Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." "Oh," said I, "I never read that before; I have come out from among them; *I have* tried to be separate; I will not touch the unclean thing. Now, I have the word and promise of God that he will be a Father to me." Then for the first time in all my life I felt there was a tie between me and God. I looked out through the

branches of the elm trees and saw the stars shining in the sky, and I said to myself: "When those stars grow old and die, God will be my Father and my Friend."

O dear friends, do you wonder that every time I go back to Yale I go up to the north entry of old South Middle, and, knocking gently at the door of some freshman there, I say: "Let me come in; let me see the place where I first saw the light and the burden of my heart rolled away?" The only sacred places in this world are those places where God has revealed himself to our souls, and that place will be forever sacred to me.

I had a lovely time that summer.

> The earth and every common sight
> To me did seem
> Appareled in celestial light.

I walked out and saw the apple trees in blossom; and curiously enough, an old Scotch Presbyterian appeared upon the scene, and said to me, without knowing who I was, nor what my condition was: "Oh, see the beauty of those blossoms! how like a Christian, adorned with the Christian graces!"

Please notice that my experience was thus far a purely Arminian experience. I had yet to learn the truth in Calvinism. In my conversion, so far as I can remember, I had no thought of the Holy Spirit or of Christ. I had no idea that God was working in me to will and to do; I was only bent on working out my own salvation. There was no reliance on Christ's atonement; I was trusting in my own power to begin

and to continue the service of God. When I think how infantile was my early faith and how far I was from understanding the workings of my own mind, I wonder at the mercy of God in accepting the offering that I made. He leads the blind by a way that they know not, and so he led me. As he had taught me the greatness of my sin, so he next taught me that salvation is of the Lord.

In the midst of the joy and peace of my new religious life, I found that I could not keep myself in the Christian way. Old habits and inclinations sprang up little by little, and I could not repress them or keep them out of my soul by any power or wisdom of my own. Then I learned my second great lesson in doctrine, namely, *Man's need of God's regenerating grace.* If I could not keep myself from falling, after I had gotten into the Christian way, how could I ever have entered that way without God's help at the beginning? Man must be born again, as well as kept by God's mighty power. Without God's regenerating and sanctifying grace, we should be forever lost.

So far I had gotten, when I began the study of theology—I had to be a preacher. I knew, from the very moment of my conversion, that I must serve God in the ministry. So I went to Rochester, and in the Theological Seminary there I gained whatever scholastic preparation I had for the work before me. But I had another source of instruction in the work I began to do as preacher in a little mission congregation in the neighborhood of Rochester. We had a canal there, and the canal-boats were laid up in winter. The men who operated them spent their time mainly in

card-playing, drinking, and fighting, so that the police of Rochester had more to keep their attention in that little quarter of the city than in all the rest of the town together. There was no church at all, and only a little broken-down schoolhouse. But there was one good woman, a woman who had the love of Christ in her heart, and who went around, like an angel of mercy, visiting the sick and making clothes for the children. She had begun a little Sunday-school on Sunday afternoon, and had instituted a preaching service on Sunday evening. She did me the honor of inviting me to help her. After teaching a Bible class in our home school on Sunday morning, I went out and superintended this little Sunday-school in the afternoon. Then in the evening I preached a sermon. I have always thanked God that I preached to so small a congregation. There were only seventy-five people, men and women on whom rhetoric would have been thrown away, and I was compelled to use the simplest language, to preach about sin, about Christ and salvation, about heaven and hell; and, if I have ever succeeded in my after ministry, it is because I have, from the very beginning, said: "I will not preach about the odds and ends of religion; I will preach about sin and about Christ," and around those two all my preaching has revolved.

We had a little evening meeting, at which I read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to a dozen young women, and then proposed that they should all kneel down and give themselves to the service of the Lord. Almost all of them made that decision, and that was the first instance I had of real effect following any

preaching of mine. But there was one young woman, of considerable mind, who could not see her way clear to accept the promise of God, and after making all manner of effort, as I had made in my own experience, she remained just where she was. It occurred to me to speak to her of Candlish's idea of a deferred atonement. Candlish, you know, says: "Suppose Christ should come now for the first time into the world, and he came to you, a sinner, and said: 'I am going to suffer for all who will put their case into my hands. I will take all your sins and responsibilities upon my own shoulders. Are you willing that I should do this? If you are willing to take me for your substitute, I will pay your debts and I will save you.'" I asked this young woman if she would take Christ for her Saviour. I saw the light of heaven shine suddenly upon her face. She looked up to me and said, "Oh! I see it; yes, I will." And from that moment she was an earnest Christian woman. From that experience I learned a third lesson in Christian doctrine, viz., *that only the objective atonement of Jesus Christ, only Christ's sufferings upon the cross, can furnish the ground of our acceptance with God.*

But, curiously enough, at the end of my senior year in the theological seminary, I had what seemed to be a hemorrhage of the lungs, and the doctors told me I must spend a whole year in the open air. So I went to Europe, and pedestrianized, and studied German. I went to Switzerland, and to the East; I saw the Holy Land, and I learned many things of value. But I found that falling in with the current of pleasure-lovers weakened my Christian resolutions. I had ended my

seminary course with the desire of going to the heathen as a missionary, if God would permit me. My health was such that I could not go, and that plan had to be given up. In my European experience the edge of my Christian feeling became dull. I lost the desire and the love for Christian service, although I learned a great deal of German, and got together a library of German books, which was very useful to me afterward. I have always felt that the loss to a man, by a residence in Europe before he has actually begun the work of his ministry, is too great a loss to make up for any mere gain in his knowledge. I would rather have a son of mine go to Europe after he has had some experience in the ministry.

After returning to this country, I became pastor of a church, and working as I did, with much weakness of body, and not only that but also with weakness of Christian feeling, I found that the chariot wheels dragged heavily; that work was hard; and that, although I spent all my afternoons in pastoral calling and working, up to the very limit of my ability, yet, at the same time, I had no joy in my work. In spite of the fact that revival services were held and there were quite a number of conversions, I felt deserted by God. I was set there to stand for him, and stand for him I would, till I died; but I felt that I was standing alone, with a whole universe of evil influences fighting against me: What was I, that I should be able to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, all combined?

I had learned about Christ *for* us, on the cross, as an external Saviour; I had yet to learn about Christ *in*

us, by his Spirit, as a Saviour within. Fortunately my summer vacation came, and I went home for rest. I went determined that I would read nothing but the Bible, until I found out where I stood before God. I read the Acts of the Apostles, and learned that they served God with gladness and singleness of heart. I looked back to the Gospel according to John, to find the cause of that joy. It was their faith that Christ was still alive, and was in them as the power of an endless life. I read about the Vine and the Branches. I had thought of union with Christ as a union of sympathy and moral likeness; now I saw that it was a union of life; a union in which the Spirit of Christ interpenetrates and energizes ours; a union in which he joins himself so indissolubly to us that neither life nor death, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from himself.

So I learned my fourth great lesson in doctrine: *the union of the believer with Christ.* It is the inmost mystery of the gospel—"Christ in you, the hope of glory." The Christian is not simply in touch with Christ, but he has Christ in his heart; and he can say with Paul, "Not I live, but Christ liveth in me." At the very beginning of my Christian experience Christ had taken up his abode within me. I had in ignorance and unbelief banished him to some remote corner of my soul. Now that I opened all the doors, he filled the whole house with his light and love.

I went back to my church with an entirely new spirit. I do not like the phrase "a new conversion," but the change in me, two years after my ministry began, was more wonderful than the change that took place when

I was first converted. Instead of feeling that I was fighting single-handed against a whole universe of evil influences, I felt that, with Christ in my heart, all the wheels of the universe were made to revolve to help me in every effort to improve my own spiritual life or to bring others to the feet of Christ. It was like life from the dead. I have never lost from that time that essential experience, and I believe, with Doctor Alexander—the older Alexander—that the doctrine of union with Christ is the central truth of all theology and of all religion. That doctrine of union with Christ had a reflex influence upon my doctrine of sin. I saw that not only was sin a nature and that nature guilt, but that my connection with the first father of the race was analogous to my connection with Christ. By union with Christ I derived the benefit of his work, and by my union with the first father of the race I was involved in his loss and condemnation. The vital union comes first; the forensic and legal union comes second, as a natural and necessary consequence.

I wish I could tell you some of the experiences that followed my discovery of this great truth of union with Christ. I preached in an entirely new way; the sermons that had taken me a whole week to prepare, I could prepare in an hour. People came to me with tears in their eyes, and said, "O Brother Strong, we never heard this before!" The truth is, my predecessor had never told them about this vital, spiritual union with Jesus Christ.

I would go out from my study in the afternoon with the desire to be led by the Spirit of the Lord in

my ministry, and I would find that many doors were open to me, and that my words had wonderful effect. There was one man in my congregation, one of the most prominent men in the community, a large-hearted and large-minded man, philanthropic and wealthy, one of the largest manufacturers in the place. His wife was a Christian, but he himself was far from it. I met him on the corner of the street, and I said: "Mr. Swett, I have wanted to speak to you for a long time; I want you to be a Christian." He said: "I think I am pretty well off; I think I am as well off as most of the members of your church are." I said, "You have never done your duty to Jesus, your Saviour." That was the end of the conversation. He excused himself, and I went away. Next morning I went down to my church, and the first deacon of the church came to me and said: "A great thing has happened. Mr. Jackson Swett is converted, and he wants to come before the whole congregation and tell the story of it." I could only reply, "We will let him." That great man came forward at the close of the service, and said with trembling voice: "My friends, I thought I was a good man, but I have found that I am one of the wickedest of all God's creatures. How I have treated my Saviour!" It appeared that, on the preceding Saturday evening, he had left his wife in the entry of his house and gone down to his office to post his books. He went up the stairs to his office; went to his safe; took his ledger out; and right then and there it occurred to him that there was an account with God which he needed to settle first; he was so overwhelmed by his conviction of sin that he let the ledger

fall, and he absolutely groveled on the floor. But right then and there the Saviour manifested himself to him in his grace and love, and he rose a Christian and went home. When his wife heard the door open, she said, "Jackson, I thought you had gone to your office." He had been gone so short a time that it almost seemed to her that he could not have left the house. That man became a faithful Christian and a deacon in the church, and he died in the Christian faith.

I used to feel it my duty to go to all the workmen in that large manufacturing town and at least give them the opportunity of recognizing their duty to Christ. So I went around among these gangs of men and invited them to come to the meetings of the church. I am not sure that I should do so again. There was one man whose wife was a member of the church, but he was not only irreligious, but bitterly hostile to religion. I talked with him, but he would not listen to anything I said. He went on hammering, to drown my voice. At last I said: "Mr. Long, I will have to let you go, but I have wanted you to come to Christ."

The next morning I was going down from my house to the church, and I met his wife. She said: "O Mr. Strong, come and see my husband. He came home yesterday in the afternoon, and he hasn't been able to rest since then. He has not eaten, and he has not slept, and he has been walking the streets all night long in distress. He wants to see you at the church. I went and found him there. I asked him to kneel down and give his heart to the Lord, and he rose from his

knees with the consciousness that his sins were forgiven. My friends, I believe that we can have just as marvelous conversions in our day as the conversion of the apostle Paul. What we want is faith in a living Christ; with Christ in our hearts we can speak the things that will save men's souls.

What have I said thus far? I have said that my first lesson in theology was the depth and enormity of sin; the second, absolute dependence on God's regenerating power; the third, the objective work of Christ upon his cross, the only ground of peace and reconciliation with God; the fourth, the union of the believer with Christ. A Christ within is just as important as a Christ without. The gospel presents to us Christ *in* us, as well as Christ *for* us. We may preach the external atonement of Christ without preaching Christ in the heart. But this last truth is the secret of pardon, peace, purity, and power.

After four years of service in an eastern pastorate I went west, to a larger parish. There I began to study science. I took up in succession mineralogy, geology, botany, microscopy, chemistry, biology, astronomy, meteorology, economics, and finally, psychology and metaphysics. To each of these I devoted the spare time of six months, beginning with some elementary treatise and following it with some more thorough text-book. At the same time I preached a series of doctrinal sermons, taking up on the second Sunday morning of each month some one of the articles of faith. This combination of scientific study and doctrinal preaching had great influence upon my theological development. My life had been largely subjective; now it became more

objective. I had been introspective; now I began to look out upon the world. I had learned my entire dependence upon Christ as an atoning and also as an indwelling Saviour. I now learned that *Christ is the life of the universe,* as well as the life of the believer; that in him all things consist, or hold together; that he is the one and only medium through whom God creates, upholds, and governs the world. This discovery of Christ's creatorship was my fifth great lesson in doctrine. My studies in science gave me inspiring views of the wisdom and power of God, and I drew from science a multitude of illustrations for my preaching. My preaching took a wider range than before. It dealt more with universal interests. I began to apply Christianity to all the relations of life. History, art, literature, society, as well as science and philosophy, might have place in my teaching. But the center must be Christ; all treasures must be laid at his feet; he must be Lord of all.

My course of doctrinal sermons, made interesting and broadened by the study of science, prepared me for the teaching of theology, and when an invitation came to exchange the pastorate for a professorship in the theological seminary, I felt it to be the call of God. For forty years I have tried to be a teacher of the teachers, and to help those who are to be leaders of the churches. But the making plain of Christian doctrine to successive classes of students for the ministry has not been without its effect upon my own theological development. There was still a step forward which I was compelled to take. I had learned that the same Christ who recreated and dwelt in believers was

also the Creator and Life of nature, and that all science was only the shining of his light. The person of Christ was the clue I had followed; his deity and atonement were the two foci of the great ellipse. How to reconcile these two, how to make deity and atonement comprehensible, *hoc opus, hic labor est.*

I had adopted the realistic explanation of justification by virtue of the believer's vital union with Christ. I had adopted the realistic explanation of the race's condemnation by virtue of its vital union with Adam and the derivation of its life from him. How now was to be explained the imputation of the sin of the race to Christ? The only possible answer seemed to be that our sin was laid upon him because of his vital union with humanity. Christ's creatorship was now invested with new meaning. His union with the race in his incarnation is only the outward and visible expression of a prior union with the race which began when he created the race. It follows that he who is the life of humanity must, though personally pure, be involved in responsibility for all human sin, and it must needs be that Christ should suffer. And so I learned my sixth great lesson in theology; namely, that *Christ, who is the life of the universe, must also bear the sins of the world.* This suffering was a reaction of the divine holiness against sin, and so was a bearing of penalty, but it was also the voluntary execution of a plan that antedated creation. Christ's sacrifice in time showed what had been in the heart of God from eternity. The atonement then is not only possible but necessary, because Christ is from the beginning the life of humanity.

I regard this explanation of the method of the atonement as my specific contribution to theological science. Imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, because of our vital union with Christ, had been explained before. Imputation of Adam's sin to us, because of our vital union with Adam, had been explained before. But, so far as I know, imputation of the sins of the race to Christ, because of the vital union of the race with Christ, had not been explained before. I have tried to show how this truth is an outgrowth of my personal religious experience. I trust it may lead others to see the rational foundation of the atonement. If nature is the continual manifestation of Christ, then he is the omnipresent and immanent God. The hand that was nailed to the cross sustains the fabric of the worlds and guides the stars in their courses. His historical atonement is but a manifestation to sense of what, as preincarnate Logos, he has been doing and suffering ever since man's first sin. Christ must suffer because, as the Creator, Upholder, and Life of the universe, he is identified with humanity, and cannot escape its liabilities and penalties. But he bears them in love, and he has redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us. To the elucidation and defense of this doctrine I have devoted a large part of my time and strength for the past forty years. A full statement of my views can be found in my book entitled " Christ in Creation," and in my " Systematic Theology."

Time fails me to tell of my still later progress. I can only mention two recent developments. I have come to a seventh stage of theological knowledge by

applying the principle of Christ's immanence to the Scriptures. *Inspiration is Christ's gradual enlightenment from within.* It can make use of all the ordinary methods of literary composition. Truth can be communicated in germ at first, and by means of parable, apologue, and even drama. The Christ who is behind and in the process guarantees the unity, the sufficiency, and the authority of Scripture. The truth dwells, not in the outward form, but in the inspiring Spirit; for Christ is himself the Truth. So the ever-living Christ makes rational our faith in the Bible, while he encourages the most rigorous inquiry into the methods of its growth. Taken together, the written word commends itself as a revelation of the eternal Word, and as able to make us wise unto salvation.

The eighth and last of my doctrinal discoveries has been an ethical one, this namely, that, while regeneration is the indispensable inward beginning, *Christ's Spirit works outwardly, to the reform of human society.* The Christian cannot fold his hands and content himself with his individual salvation. Christ is "the Saviour of all men," and his religion requires the proclamation of his gospel to every human creature. As the Creator and Upholder of the universe, Christ has a natural connection with every human heart, and service done to any human being is service done to him. But he is also the Creator of a new society; and to follow him is to enlist in all manner of effort for the reform of industrial and business and governmental relations, until these are pervaded by his Spirit. Not the church as an organization, however, but rather the individual members of the church, are to engage

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in trade and politics, with a view to the bringing of society under the dominion of Christ. The church is Christ's organ for individual regeneration, and Christians are Christ's organs for the regeneration of the social order. My personal experience teaches me that both politics and business can be Christianized only by individual Christians, who carry into them the Spirit of Christ.

You have perceived, I trust, that this experience of mine is centered in Christ; and that it is simply a growing manifestation of Christ to my mind and heart. I believe in Christ; I believe in his veritable deity; I believe in prayer to Christ. If Christ is really divine, then he is the object of prayer. Let us recognize Christ in his omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence; for he is with us alway, even unto the end of the world; able to save to the uttermost; the same yesterday and to-day and forever. He is himself the greatest gift which he can bestow upon his ministers; and the one gift above all others that I desire for the alumni and students of this seminary is, that for you to live may be Christ, that you may know Christ *for you* and Christ *in you,* the power of God unto salvation. If I have even slightly contributed to such a result as this, I will appropriate to myself the words of the Latin poet, and say:

> Exegi monumentum aere perennius,
> Regalique situ pyramidum altius;
> Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens
> Possit diruere, nec innumerabilis
> Annorum series, et fuga temporum.
> Non omnis moriar; multaque pars mei
> Vitabit Libitinam.

Or, if I may put it into English:

> I have erected a monument more lasting than bronze,
> More lofty than the regal structure of the pyramids;
> Which gnawing storm and impotent north-wind cannot
> destroy,
> Neither the innumerable succession of the years,
> Nor the flight of time. I shall not wholly die;
> The larger part of me will escape the tomb.

Better words than these of Horace are the words of Paul: "Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord"; and better still are the words of Christ, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

II

DEUTERONOMY, OR SELF-LIMITATION [1]

I VALUE this honor as highly as any that could come to me—this side of Jordan. My students are dear to me, and I can truly say that I have given my life to them for these last forty years. I feel somewhat as Moses must have felt at the end of his stay in the wilderness, though Moses had a rebellious people to deal with, as I have not, and I do not read that the children of Israel gave him any farewell dinner on the eve of his departure. But there is one thing which he gave to them, and that is Deuteronomy, the second law, the summary of his teaching, the republication of his doctrine. And that is the only thing I can give you today. We must not fear repetitions, if they are repetitions of the truth; for Jesus himself uttered the same parable on more than one occasion, and Paul told over and over again the story of his conversion.

But my text shall be taken, not from Scripture, but from Goethe. Let us accept truth, from whatever quarter it may come; for God inspired even ungodly Balaam and Caiaphas. Fifty-two years ago I found this text quoted in Julius Müller's "Doctrine of Sin," and I put it into English blank verse, as follows:

[1] An address at a banquet tendered to the author by the students of the Rochester Theological Seminary, February 29, 1912, near the close of his work as President and Professor of Systematic Theology.

> In vain shall spirits that are all unbound
> To the pure heights of perfectness aspire;
> In limitation first, the master shines;
> And law alone can give us liberty.

Yes, I say, if the law be not the law of compulsion, but the law of love. And so I present to you the quintessence of Deuteronomy: *Self-limitation is the law of love.* Only the service of God is perfect freedom.

Steam unconfined does no work. Long before Edison, there was electricity enough to drive all the machinery of the world, but only when it was bottled up in storage batteries was it of practical use to man. Self-limitation is the law of all valuable and productive life. God himself, in creation, tames his boundless energy, condenses it into definite forces, and subjects it to law. Out of endless possibilities of worlds, he selects a fixed number; out of manifold ways of working, he chooses certain regular methods of development and evolution. Preservation, providence, government, education of the race—what are they, but lines of activity to which God has pledged himself; operations of an infinite will that has narrowed itself; in short, self-limitations of God in human history?

But it is only in Christ that this law of love finds its complete expression. Could there be any more wonderful instance of self-limitation than that which occurred when he who filled immensity took up his residence as a microscopic point in the womb of the Virgin; when the omniscient One condescended to grow in knowledge and in favor with God and man; when the Omnipotent washed the feet of Judas, the traitor; when the All-holy took upon him the burden of our

sin and guilt, and, as the sacrificial Lamb, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross?

I was once asked whether the man Christ Jesus did not seem too narrow a being to command universal and complete admiration; whether the absence in him of wit, humor and laughter, marriage, art and literature, science and invention, government and reform, did not put him out of the category of a well-rounded humanity, and so withdraw him from our perfect sympathy. I could only answer that my questioner forgot Christ's self-limitation of love; forgot that he was not the composite photograph of all men, but rather, the object-lesson of what was most essential to man; in other words, forgot that Christ came to die. He might have been the greatest of painters, sculptors, poets, scientists, philosophers; aye, the greatest of the kings of the earth; but he emptied himself of his glory, in order that he might redeem us from sin, and reunite us to God. We do not laugh at a funeral; and the death of our Lord cast its shadow backward over all his life. But the cross was his glory. To him it was a lifting up, for the narrowing down was the revelation of the very secret of the universe and of the very heart of God.

So we must take up our cross and follow him, or we cannot be his disciples. This does not mean that we should plant our feet in his precise footsteps, or deprive ourselves of all of which he was deprived. But it does mean that we should have in us his spirit, the spirit of self-sacrifice and self-limitation. We may be artists, or writers, or inventors, or statesmen; but we must find God's particular calling, and must confine

ourselves to that. As God sent Christ, so Christ sends us, to represent him and his law of self-sacrificing love. If we are his ministers, we must give up money, pleasure, fame, as objects of ambition; must do a peculiar work; must possibly accept a meager lot; in short, must know only Christ, and him crucified.

President Anderson used to say that he had never done anything that he wanted to do; only hard tasks had been set for him; he had been ground up into mortar, to cement the foundation-stones of the University of Rochester. I look back upon my own life, and it seems a succession of self-limitations. The first was when, as a boy, I gave up the pleasures of a spring vacation in order that I might get ahead in my Latin. The second was when, in college, I broke away from my sins and gave myself to the service of God. The third was when I surrendered my ambitions for literature and the law, to become a preacher of the gospel. The fourth was when I resisted the persuasions of college-mates and relatives, and determined to obey the New Testament teaching and enter the denomination to which I have devoted myself. The fifth was when I took the pastorate in a country town, instead of waiting for the larger city field to which I was naturally inclined. The sixth was when I heard Christ's word, "Abide in me, and I in you," and I gave myself to Christ, in an entire consecration, and received him by an appropriating faith. The seventh was when I turned my back on a college presidency, and concluded to spend all my days in fitting young men for the ministry.

I have tried to make the seminary an object-lesson

of this idea. Not the vagueness and freedom of rationalism, but the self-limitation of a scriptural faith. Not the methods of the politician or the worldling, but Christ's ways of regeneration and faith and prayer. An authoritative Bible, an evangelical theology, a spiritual church—these are our instruments for winning men. They are God's appointed means; and I would rather send out from this seminary ten consecrated preachers and missionaries than a hundred brilliant scholars and critics. Our first need is to be great believers. If we seek first the kingdom of God, all other things needed shall be added to us.

When the Bedouin Arab makes a present, he always expects to get more in return than he gives. It is the law of the Christian life that God's returns are infinitely greater than our gifts. If we are faithful over a few things, he makes us rulers over many things. When we make of ourselves a living sacrifice, we find that all things are ours. We humble ourselves to take the lowest place, and we are bidden to come up higher. We give up all to Christ, and we are made to sit with him upon his throne. I speak to many a man who has already found the joy of the Lord to repay a thousandfold the pains of sacrifice; and who has experienced such an enlargement of soul in helping others, that heaven itself seemed to him begun below. After temptation and struggle and suffering has come victory, and angels have ministered to him. The way of death to self has been the way of life eternal, and the cross has become the very ladder to heaven.

You have seen the picture of the blind girl, in the midst of a stormy sea, clinging with both hands to the

cross that rises just before her, and you have felt the deep significance of it:

> Nothing in my hands I bring;
> Simply to Thy cross I cling

is the utterance of every Christian heart. But the picture lacks two elements of truth. Faith is not blind. If it were, it might just as well clasp the crucifix, or even an image of Buddha. And then, faith is not wholly concerned with its own salvation. It strives to rescue others also. The revised picture represents this same girl with one hand grasping the cross, while with the other hand she reaches down to help another struggling soul to reach the rock of refuge on which she herself stands secure. The self-limitation of love not only gives our all to God, but it gives our all to man. And the essence of Deuteronomy will be embodied in human life, only when we who have given ourselves to Christ have also lifted up the lost and shipwrecked and despairing world to its rest and refuge in the Rock of Ages.

CHAPEL-TALKS

1. SACRED PLACES

It is a great pleasure to be here. In fact it is hard for me to stay away. This place is sacred to me. The Lord has often revealed himself here. The only places on earth that are really sacred are those in which we have met with God, and the Lord has made himself known to us. I never go back to New Haven without knocking gently at the door of my old room in South Middle, and begging the men who now occupy it to allow me the privilege of looking into the rude apartment " where I first saw the light and the burden of my soul rolled away." It was there that I watched the stars through the branches of those elm trees, and rejoiced that though the stars should grow pale and die, God would still be my Father and my Friend. I never go back to my first pastorate in Massachusetts without visiting the place where I experienced my second conversion—though I do not like that particular phrase—for it was after the beginning of my ministry that I received a new revelation of God's grace, and came to realize my union with Christ and his personal presence and indwelling in my soul.

We need to make the most of these sacred places. We are not pure spirits. We have bodies. We have local attachments, which have much to do with our religious aspirations and life. The sacredness of these places depends on our cooperation with God, and on our use of the means which he has provided. It is

not enough that God decrees. We must decree also. To make this place a haven of rest for our souls, we need to consecrate to God our time, our thought, and our service. It is not enough for us to come here to get good; we never get good, unless we try to do good; we never receive blessing, except in proportion as we try to communicate blessing. From the very beginning we must decide to do our part, and not to wait for others. We must have our word to say; we must use our opportunity for prayer; we must give an example to others. We must forget our own personal interest, and make the meeting a means of good to those around us.

We will receive more good in this way than if we were merely receptive and passive. The receptive and passive indeed have their place in the Christian life. But we must also work out our own salvation, for the very reason that it is God that works in us. He has attached a special blessing to the meeting for prayer, for he says: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." If we believe this, if we come to meet him, if we take our part in the prayer that rises here, then something will follow that would never have come but for this meeting. We shall not fail of a blessing, and like Jacob we shall say: "This is the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

2. THE INVISIBLE GOD

One of the most common excuses for disbelief in God is that God is invisible. A great astronomer said he had swept the heavens with his telescope, but he had never found God. It would be just as sensible to sweep his floor with a broom, and then say he had never found God. God is neither star nor dust. Only material objects can be seen. And so the Scripture says well, "No man hath seen God at any time."

Is this an obstacle to faith? Has it ever occurred to you that you have never seen your own soul? You are invisible. No man, with his bodily eyes, ever saw spirit—neither his own spirit nor the spirit of his dearest friend. It is interesting to note that men who do not believe in God gradually cease to believe in their own souls. Not only Buddhists, but also skeptics in Christian lands, make the soul to be a mere succession of ideas and feelings, and they talk of "psychology without a soul." There is the same tendency to doubt the existence of an ego or internal spirit, as there is to doubt the existence of a non-ego or external spirit. Yet spirit and not matter, spirit and not ideas, is the primary thing. We cannot cognize the non-ego, except as we first cognize the ego from which we distinguish it. We cannot know the external world, except as we first know the internal world, the self over against it. And similarly, the invisibility of God is only the more fundamental fact, which has its analogy in our

knowledge of finite spirits. If finite spirits are invisible, it is not wonderful that the infinite Spirit is also invisible.

You remember the inscription on the temple of Apollo at Delphi, "Know thyself." It taught the Greeks that they could recognize God, only as they first recognized the self within. You must know personality *here*, in order to understand personality *there*. In the facts of our own self-consciousness, and of our own conscience, we have the condition and the guarantee of all theological truth.

It is a great thing to get into one's own internal self. We can do this only with the help of the Spirit of God. When we have the door of our inner consciousness open and know ourselves as we really are—spirits, creatures, sinners—then only can we know the invisible God, our Creator, our Redeemer, and our King.

3. THE RESIDUE OF THE SPIRIT

THE present danger of our missionaries in China has touched our hearts and has awakened the impulse to prayer. We ought not to forget them in their time of distress. Yet we cannot pray very definitely without the element of hope. It is doubtful whether any individual success or any church success is possible without hope. But you can never acquire hopefulness by saying to yourself, "Go to now! I will hope!"

You must have some reason for hope, and the Scriptures give you that. There is a little text in the book of Malachi which says, "With him is the residue of the Spirit"—unused resources and resources that are infinite. God has done great things in the past, and yet Jesus says to his disciples: "Greater things than these shall ye see." Has God done anything for us in the past, and have we come to think that we can hardly expect anything more in the future? My brethren, what was done in the past was only the beginning. Pentecost was wonderful; yet Pentecost was but the feast of first-fruits. And what proportion do the first-fruits bear to the large harvest that is to be gathered?

God has great resources to display and to use, provided his people will only believe in him and expect great things from him. The infinity of God is pledged in behalf of the Christian church, and in behalf of each individual, when they attempt great things for him.

" Mercy shall be built up forever " in the work of those who labor for the praise of his great name.

Great things can be done for us; more than we have ever imagined. Great things are possible in the Christian church, on the mission field, and right here in this seminary. If we will only believe this, the Lord will take our prayers and in answer to them will send down upon us a mighty influence of his Spirit! Let us all unite in hope, in prayer, in expectation, that this year may witness a great manifestation of God among us!

4. THE VICTORY

"I CAN do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me," says the apostle, and the link of connection between us and Christ is faith. I had an experience of that five years ago. I had to give a sermon before the Baptist World Alliance in London, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, where Charles H. Spurgeon used to preach. Going into Liverpool I exposed myself for several hours in a very cold wind and caught the lumbago, to such an extent that on my arrival in London I could not stand. The doctor said I would have to lie in bed, and it was doubtful whether I would be able to preach at all. On the night of the sermon I was driven across the city, four miles, in a chilling wind and in an open carriage, to the Tabernacle. I thought my last day and my last sermon had come. I had to lie down in the waiting-room before the sermon. Between three and four thousand people had assembled, and I had to read my sermon before a congregation that was not accustomed to hear sermons read, and my sermon was a very long one.

I thought I should die. I said to the Lord that if he would only carry me through this experience everything he might send after would be acceptable. Then a text occurred to me: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Somehow that put new heart into me. Doctor Mabie offered prayer, a most heaven-compelling prayer, and then the whole

congregation sang, "All hail the power of Jesus' name," to the tune "Diadem," which you will find on the back cover of our hymnals and which I brought over here. We never knew it before. There were between three and four hundred Welshmen at the left of the platform, and they sang it as I never heard men sing before or since. It seemed to lift the roof from the building. Four thousand people threw their whole souls into the song. And so I was heartened up to preach, and I am sorry to say that I preached an hour and a half. But I got through safely, and I was taken back through that same cold wind in that same open carriage. I had a hot supper, and the next morning I was still alive.

I do not imagine that this is as interesting to you as it was to me. But this text, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," did the business for me, and I learned that I could do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.

5. PATIENT CONTINUANCE

In my childhood my mother taught me to say that little sentence, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." I think it had a permanent influence on my life. She told me the story of Robert Bruce in his hiding-place; he wanted to escape, and tried many ways without success. Then he noticed a spider trying to carry a little burden up the wall. The spider dropped the burden many times, but it kept on, and finally succeeded. This nerved the heart of the fugitive, and he took new courage to attempt his own deliverance.

Lord Beaconsfield in his first speech in Parliament was a complete failure. He misjudged his subject and his method; but, angry at his own mistakes, in less than a week he made a speech which was an entire success. Really to do a thing you need determination. If you fail, it indicates your method is wrong; therefore mend it. "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

Scripture takes up this theme when it exhorts us to patience. "Patient continuance in well doing," as the Authorized version expresses it. Stick to a thing until you accomplish it. But Christian patience is more than native energy of will. Such patience is dependent on a higher Power. Even though we may have the determination, we are by ourselves unequal to the task. Vigor and hopefulness are necessary, but the Lord

reenforces the power of the man who sets his face with flintlike determination, and says, "I will do it."

Genius is not so much a natural gift, as it is a settled determination to do things. It is industry, setting one's self at a task which at first seems insurmountable. In the book of Revelation we have perseverance and success conjoined, "The kingdom and patience which are in Jesus." If we are to have the kingdom, we must have the patience.

6. "THE CROSS! THE CROSS!"

LUTHER had a great way of blurting things out. "He who is a Christian, is no Christian," he said: which means that the man who thinks he has attained, and is not concerned about being better, has not the root of the matter in him.

I came across another saying of Luther only yesterday. "If a man will say with Christ: 'The cross! the cross!' there will be no cross." If you give yourself to Christ in absolute surrender, duty will become a pleasure. How true that is! A task is irksome, and we want to be excused. But, if we consider that it must be done, and we set ourselves to do it, then, instead of being irksome, it becomes satisfying, and we derive pleasure from it.

A great deal of sorrow, I am sure, can be turned into joy by complete submission to the will of Christ. You may remember that the wife of Jonathan Edwards was one of the holiest and loveliest characters in American history. When her husband died, she was so wrapped up in the will of God that her sorrow turned into joy, and she had great difficulty in concealing the joy that filled her heart, for fear that her neighbors and friends might think that she rejoiced over the death of her husband.

Death itself is turned into life, and people who are dying have in their last few moments exhibited countenances overspread with gladness. I take Christ and

his cross, and fellowship with Christ and his suffering brings the joy of his resurrection.

So we find life in death. If a man will take up his cross and follow Christ, he will have in his own heart the assurance that he is Christ's disciple. Only in taking up the cross do we secure the crown. That saying of Luther is worth treasuring up. Let a man say, "The cross! the cross!" and with Christ in the heart, there will be no cross.

7. RESIST BEGINNINGS

Ought a minister of the gospel to use tobacco? I have had a little experience with regard to that matter. In my spring vacation at Yale fifty-five years ago I made a decision to serve the Lord. But I was hampered by certain college habits and associations, and only gradually did I learn what it meant to surrender all to Christ. I returned to college without thinking seriously of what I was to encounter. As I entered my room I saw a box of cigars on the mantel. I stood still and asked myself what would be the result if I continued to use tobacco. My conclusion was: "The only thing for me to do is to cut this dog's tail off right behind his ears," and I resolved not to touch tobacco again. For forty years I kept that vow, and my resolve proved a great benefit to me.

Objections to the use of tobacco were simply these: In the first place, it would have taken me out of a certain useful line of associations and companionships; in the second place, as a man of sedentary habits, I would have found it a hygienic mistake. It is not so much a moral as a physical harm; and especially for a man who does not live much in the open air. For an intellectual man it is a great mistake to use tobacco in any form. And so I am glad that I formed that resolution.

In this connection there is one other thing which has come under my observation. I knew a very bril-

liant young man in the ministry who continually used tobacco. During his pastorate he was quoted as an example by the young men of his church and congregation. But the mothers of these young men were greatly grieved. The young men pointed to the pastor's habit to justify their own bad habits, and there was a corresponding deduction from his influence for good. This confirmed my view that, for a pastor, the use of tobacco is an exceedingly great mistake.

I am sorry to perceive the growth of the cigarette habit in boys. It leads in the wrong direction,—into general self-indulgence, and then into definitely evil things. It is far better for a growing boy to be entirely pure and free. The use of tobacco stirs up many appetites that had better be checked rather than encouraged. *Obsta principiis*—let us teach others to resist the beginnings of evil.

8. SONS AND HEIRS

I saw, only a few days ago, a sermon by Doctor Bosworth, of Oberlin, which pleased me much. His text was, "If a son, then an heir." God's making us his sons is only preliminary to making us his heirs.

This heirship is conditional. Thaddeus Stevens, of Pennsylvania, a great politician and a very able man, had a son who was inclined to be wayward. When the father died he left all his fortune to his son, provided that the son maintained a discreet and unspotted life up to the age of twenty-one. He was to possess great wealth, but his possession was conditional. The father wished his son to be a rightful and proper heir. That, says Doctor Bosworth, is the way God is educating us. He puts us through much discipline, in order that we may become ready to receive great things from him.

Our business is to recognize the loving-kindness of God and of his dealings. We have the certainty that if we follow out his plan, and submit to his government of our lives, all will be well, and we shall be heirs of great things. All things are ours potentially; they become ours in reality, if we are only faithful.

The list of things which are to become ours is an interesting study. Take knowledge, for example: the things we know not now, we shall know hereafter; love—how scant our affections are now—they will become larger and grander in the future; power—"Greater things than these shall ye do." We know

not what we shall be; but this we know that, when Christ is manifested, we shall be manifested with him in glory.

We are the heirs of the universe. God is our Father. He is our inheritance. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?"

What a great program for us who are to enter the ministry! to give ourselves absolutely to God; to do his will; to submit to his discipline. What a great prospect is set before us! to inherit all things. Let us not faint nor fear, so long as we are the sons and heirs of Almighty God!

9. MEEKNESS

THERE is a Christian grace which is certainly not natural to us, and which is very hard to cultivate—I mean the grace of meekness. To bear contempt with a calm spirit, without anger—how hard that is! Not to be resentful, when people are unpleasant and impolite to us—how extremely difficult!

I always admired that Scotch minister who, when a young man, was placed in charge of a rather large parish. One of his congregation, a rough, impolite man, said to him, "I don't think you are fit for this church." And the minister replied: "My dear friend, that is just what I thought myself, but we had to yield to the majority." The man was at once disarmed and became a warm friend. In both the parishes which I served as minister, I had men who turned the cold shoulder to me and were inclined to be ugly. But I said to myself: "My dear friends, wait a little, and I will weave such a web around you that you can't escape from it." I was very good to their wives and children, and I paid them more attention than I paid to others. So I won them by kindness, and they became my friends. There are very few men who in the end will resist that kind of treatment.

But, not to show temper—what a grace that is! I really believe that half the broken pastorates are due to an exhibition of temper on the part of the minister.

He is not meek; he allows his personal feelings to override his relation to Christ. Meekness is hard to cultivate; but we have Christ for an example. He was meek and lowly in heart. What a wonderful example that is! He, the highest of all, willing to be an object-lesson, taking a basin of water and a towel, and washing the disciples' feet! That common civility, characteristic of oriental feasts, was neglected, because the disciples were too big to undertake it. But the Lord undertook it, and he washed their feet. There was divine meekness and humility.

Brethren, we must sink ourselves. We must get Christ's spirit to enable us to control our temper. We must remember that we are his ministers; there is our help. I hope that no one of you, in a future pastorate, will break with your church, and then look back on some little conversation, perhaps with an important man in the membership, in which you were offended, and in which you showed that you were offended; whereas, if you had only had the spirit of Christ, you could have won that man through meekness and humility, and he would have become your steadfast friend.

10. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Our German Baptist churches are in some respects object-lessons to us. They maintain the old-fashioned, scriptural, evangelical faith; and they furnish us with an example in the matter of church discipline.

I fear that in our cities, in our American churches especially, we are forgetting that we are bound by our church covenant to have a watchcare over our fellow members; and that, when they show signs of going astray, it is our duty to admonish them tenderly, and with a brotherly spirit to bring them back. Our city churches, and our country churches also, allow members to drift away without much notice, and as a result these members get so far away that it is hard for them to come back.

I remember reading about an old Scotchman who told another, "We have had a great revival of religion in our church." "How many were brought in?" asked the other. "Oh!" was the reply, "we did not get any in, but we got a lot of them out." The best evidence of revival-spirit in any church is the disposition to exclude members who will not walk in the way of the Lord.

This exclusion is absolutely necessary for the sake of those who are living true Christian lives. It is a terrible thing for young people to know that well-to-do and influential members hardly ever come to the Lord's Supper, and are rarely in attendance upon public

worship. These young people cannot see such examples without being influenced by them. We need to watch over our membership, and to give them from time to time such tender admonitions as shall prevent their straying away.

Years ago I visited Spurgeon's Tabernacle in London. I happened to be there on a communion Sunday, and I found that every communicant had to put a ticket on the plate and, if there was no ticket for a certain one, he was promptly visited and the reason for his absence inquired into. This is an admirable thing to do, and we ought to do more of it here in America. In this way we should give to negligent members the impression that their neglect cannot be tolerated, and they would be made to decide whether they will or will not walk with the church. It is my firm conviction that our churches must be smaller if they would be larger.

II. DANGER AND DELIVERANCE

The Eighteenth Psalm is a sort of summary of David's life. The psalmist is at the height of his career and, after all the many tribulations of the past, he gathers all the difficulties, all the dangers, all the afflictions of his life into one great picture of trial and suffering; but at the same time he gathers all of God's wonderful deliverances into one grand theophany, in which God comes in storm and tempest to rescue his afflicted soul. The poet gathers up all the dangers of life and all of God's deliverances into one great song.

There is one little text in that psalm which would make an admirable subject or theme for a sermon. "Thou wilt light my candle." That is the way it reads in our old version. In the Revised version we have it, "Thou wilt light my lamp." This probably means the lamp of prosperity; that surely is dependent upon God. Perhaps it also means the lamp of knowledge, or the lamp of eternal life. It is not necessary to limit the meaning. We can draw from it all we like in the way of divine deliverance and help in the midst of the needs of humanity.

All of us have candles or lamps, but the trouble is that they are not lighted. We have religious natures, but that is a very different thing from having those natures in operation. Capacity for knowledge? Yes, but how different that is from actual knowledge! There lies the mistake of many in their interpretation

of religion. If they can prove that man is a religious being by nature, they think that is all that is necessary. The heathen are religious beings, but that is a very different thing from having that religious nature properly exercised. A candle is of no use unless it is lighted. Only God can light our candles. Only he can make us capable of giving light to others. Without him we can do nothing, but we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us. He will give holiness, wisdom, power; and nothing is impossible for those whose candles are lighted by God.

12. WATCH AND PRAY

I WISH to say a word about the awful tragedy in Boston. A young minister is reported to have seduced a girl of his flock, and then to have murdered her in order to marry another. He is a recent graduate of a theological seminary, and there are several lessons which we, as theological students, ought to learn from that affair.

In the first place, we ought not to be guilty of premature judgment. Every man has the right to speak in his own defense, and there may be facts in this case with which we are as yet unacquainted. So let us suspend judgment for the present.

A second lesson is that ministers of the gospel are not exempt from temptation. Let us not imagine that, in our places of trust, we are going to be free from the attacks of Satan. We must watch and pray, lest, having preached to others, we ourselves shall become castaways.

A final lesson is this: The man who, clothed in the livery of Jesus Christ, leads astray a trusting member of his church, is a dreadful criminal in the sight of God and in the sight of man as well. If there is any place in hell lower than all the rest, it must be reserved for the man who uses his opportunity as a minister of the gospel to seduce a young girl of his congregation. If there is any sin or crime more wicked and damnable than any other, it must be that.

Such sins are not committed without previous preparation. Evil desires lurk in the soul long before they are put into execution. They constitute the real sources of temptation, and we must be constantly on our guard against them. Dr. Samuel Johnson once said that there was no crime in the calendar of which he did not find the beginnings in his own soul. Every one of us must recognize the truth of that statement. The beginnings of evil are in the wayward desires of the heart; then is the time and there is the place to check them. If they are allowed to grow, little by little they gain possession of the whole man.

What a dreadful wreck it is for a minister of the gospel to put an end to all his blessed opportunities of service by the commission of one act which not only undoes all the good he has done in the past, but also ruins the church which he has vowed to serve! The church does not get over such a scandal for many years. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

13. FOLLOWING ON TO KNOW THE LORD

"Let us know, let us follow on to know, Jehovah." We must begin with the alphabet, if we would learn to read. We must master the multiplication-table, if we would become experts in mathematics. We must begin with the elements, if we wish to become masters in science. A man standing at the edge of a forest, and refusing to enter the narrow pathway which leads through it, simply because he cannot see the other end of the path, will never get through at all.

Yet that is the way I felt when I began the Christian life. There was one single step which I knew I ought to take. Beyond that, all was so vague and mysterious that I felt myself a fool for venturing on a path of which I could not see the other end. Yet it was wisdom for me to take that first step, for so soon as that first step, that first duty, was done, another step, another duty, made itself known to me.

Dr. William Adams Brown, of New York, tells the story of a young woman who entered the wild mountain region of North Carolina with no intention except that of furnishing a home for a friend. She found there a poverty-stricken, ignorant, and unpleasant neighborhood. The people had no physician; so she began to give them medicine, to help them in nursing, and to make herself useful in other ways. They had no minister, and they were sadly in need of religious instruction, so she opened a Sunday-school. Soon the

whole community felt the benefit. Her example, teaching, and influence turned that dreary region into a paradise. But the reflex influence upon herself was even greater. She gained larger convictions of what she ought to do, and what effects she might produce in other lines of service. She asked herself, "Is it right to confine myself here?" The result was that she left that place and went to another place, even more benighted than the first. She began the same sort of work there, but on a larger scale, and continued it until she had spent her whole life in self-sacrificing service.

That is the way in which Christ educates us, if we will only throw ourselves with complete abandon into his work. He will show us what to do. He will lead us into larger and larger work, greater and greater usefulness, more and more complete development of our own powers.

This same principle applies to missionary work. In the early days, missionaries went out with the one idea of bringing individual souls to Christ. Their efforts were exclusively evangelistic. But, after working for some time, they found that ignorance in a community was a great hindrance to the gospel. So they established schools. Then they found that sickness and lack of care for the body was also a hindrance. The result was medical missions. After a little, economic troubles were noticed, and they received the same attention. Still further, in Turkey, the government influence was inveterately hostile to Christianity. But the power of the gospel began to penetrate whole communities. The sultan came to realize that missionaries, without

intending it, were the greatest enemies to his régime. That Turkey has now a constitutional government is due to the work and influence of Christian missions.

So the Lord takes our humble, narrow-minded efforts, spreads them out, and makes them accomplish more than we had ever dared to hope. It is a great thing to serve Christ. Let us not hesitate, but do the work he bids us do, with perfect confidence that he will show what is good for us further on. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

14. CHRIST AND THE NATIONS

CHRIST is moving in the affairs of men. The progress made toward political freedom during the last decade should convince us of this. Would it not have been amazing ten years ago if we had been told that Portugal to-day would have a republic; that Turkey would have a constitutional government; that Persia would have the beginnings of a representative system; that Japan would have a Parliament, and even Russia a Duma? And now it is China! The rebels are aiming to make China a republic, and the only compromise which the imperialists are offering is a constitution and a popular assembly. Christ is surely turning and overturning among the nations.

In all this, the influence of America has without doubt been very great, and our missions have done much to bring about the result. God has taken the feeble efforts of his people, and has made them productive of changes such as even the most hopeful of us would not have dared to expect.

It takes a long time to bore a hole in the rock to receive the dynamite, but it does not take a long time to blow the rock asunder. The long, slow preparation of past years is coming to quick consummation, and we may see things in the next ten years which would absolutely amaze us if we should hear of them now.

What a time for missionary work! What a time for encouragement to every man to do his best, and to

leave results in the hands of Christ! The Lord surely is in his world. I wonder if we always take his word as we ought to take it. "All authority is committed to me in heaven and in earth." Christ is on the throne, and he is leading the march of history, just as centuries ago he led the children of Israel in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Let us bless and praise his name that we are permitted to have anything to do with the progress of his kingdom!

15. CONTROL OF OUR MOODS

One of the greatest tasks of life is gaining control of our moods. We are variable creatures, and if we trust our temporary feelings, we shall fail to accomplish more than half of our duty. We are too apt to make our temporary state of feeling a reason for not doing what we ought to do. One who gets into the habit of trusting his moods, rather than his judgments or his determinations, may fail to accomplish anything of importance in his Christian life.

Our moods are not ourselves. They are the mere shifting clouds that pass over our sky, and we are for the most part to disregard them. We have indeed a certain power of will to inhibit them and to prevent their influence. We can combat our moods, by summoning up right thoughts and by initiating right actions. In these ways we can completely banish the evil moods, and even make them the occasions of good.

We recognize this in the matter of study. You are sitting down perhaps to learn a lesson or to write a sermon, but you do not feel like doing either one of these. Well, you never will learn or write, unless you begin. Doctor Johnson was once asked whether a man should wait for the Muse when he did not have the inclination to write, "No, sir; sit down and write, doggedly!" was the answer. There is an English maxim which expresses that idea, "It's dogged that does it." Mrs. Deland says, "When you feel too old

to do a thing, do it." So I would say: When you do not feel like doing a thing that needs to be done, just do it, and the proper mood will come.

> For tasks in hours of insight willed
> May be in hours of gloom fulfilled.

Follow your original purpose, and let the moods take care of themselves. Begin your task, even without inclination, and you will soon come to enjoy it.

Brethren, do not make a deity of your moods. Subdue them rather. Act from principle, and not from feeling. It is especially needful that the young people of our churches should determine their actions in this way. But they will only do so if we furnish them with a proper example.

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16. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

THE "Confessions of Augustine" are, I suppose, the greatest revelations of the human heart which we have outside the Bible. We ought to be familiar with them. One thing in those Confessions strikes me as very beautiful. Augustine says that in his unregenerate days, dissatisfied with the world and with himself, conscious that sin had a terrible hold upon his nature and that there was no power which could overcome the evil within him, he was like a man with his back to the sun, yet looking out upon the universe. He saw all things illuminated, but he did not see the source of that illumination and, worst of all, his own face was in darkness.

What a picture that is of men without Christ! When Paul was converted, it pleased God to reveal his Son in him. He turned his face toward Christ, whom he had not seen before, and the moment he turned, Christ's glory was reflected from his own face, and the splendor of that vision smote him to the ground. Only when he turned was his own face illuminated; only when he turned did he perceive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Our great trouble is that we do not turn round. We see the works of God, we see his revelations, but we fail to recognize the source from which those works and those revelations come. "I am the Light of the world," says Christ; "he that followeth after me shall not walk

in darkness, but shall have the light of life." If we will only turn around, not only will other things be lit up, but Christ's face will illumine our own souls as well.

In order to become effective preachers of the gospel of Christ we need to know whence the light comes, and to have the light on our faces and in our hearts. So shall the world know that we have been with Christ and have learned of him.

17. THE AWAKENING OF CHINA

"CHINA is a sleeping giant; let her sleep," said the first Napoleon. But China is very much awake, and the revolution in China is the most significant event of the last hundred years. Those four hundred millions, when thoroughly aroused, are capable of revolutionizing the whole world.

The Chinese have a staying power which the Japanese have not. The Chinese are the Germans of the East, as the Japanese are the French of the East. It takes a long time to rouse those Eastern Germans, but when they are roused they are mighty. The Chinese Christians in the Boxer Revolution stood by their profession, and went to their death heroically. And late accounts of the fighting at Hankow show that the Chinese will step up to the muzzle of the guns and will fight hand to hand.

It is the permeating influence of our Western civilization, and especially of our missionary enterprises, that has wrought this great change. And now, the most hopeful thing is that foreigners are to be protected. China learned a great lesson in the Boxer Revolution. It was not safe policy to kill foreigners. There is a respect which is born of fear; but there is also a respect which is born of gratitude. America has had much to do with the present condition in China. The fact of our remitting the indemnity for the Boxer raids upon our missions, and our paying back twelve

millions of dollars to which they had no legal claim, drew out and won the Chinese heart. Chinamen felt that there was at least one disinterested nation on earth. Those twelve millions were not spent in China for internal development or for munitions of war, but were used in sending Chinese students to America for their education.

We have great reason to hope for China. If any one wants to know where to invest his life to the best advantage, it will be worth his while to consider his opportunity to touch the springs of the future in China. Work done in China now will exert an influence which will widen to the end of time. At the fountain, where the springs begin, you can do something which will count for all the future. I envy the missionaries who are preparing at this time to go to China.

Christ is the ruler over the nations, and the triumph of his kingdom is sure. Events like those we have been considering make us hope that the triumph of his kingdom may not be delayed so long as we have imagined. For "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

18. PREPARATION AND PREPAREDNESS

How plain it is that God requires preparation for his work! Moses had to spend forty years in the wilderness before he began to deliver Israel. David led a shepherd life many years before he came to the kingdom. Think of John the Baptist's sojourn in the desert before he called Israel to repentance! Our Lord himself began his public ministry only after he had reached the age of thirty. And Paul spent three years in Arabia before he became apostle to the Gentiles. Let us take the needed time for preparation. We may be in too great haste to enter upon our work.

But it is even more important to be in readiness when the time for work comes. Preparedness is better than preparation. It certainly is not wise for a man to spend the whole day in sharpening his scythe, for he can do no work after the day is over. To do good work he should begin early. It may be possible to do something, even with a dull scythe. But I have heard of a man who ran so far to get a start that he fell into the ditch instead of jumping over it.

Two things go together: Needed preparation and readiness to enter upon our work whenever God calls. Put these two things together and success is sure.

The way in which we spend our time in these days of preparation will largely determine our success hereafter. Some one has said that it is of no use to carry to China a lamp that will not burn in this country.

Let us not imagine that we will win souls in our future ministry, if we have no soul-winning spirit, and no spiritual influence over others, here and now.

Dr. E. G. Robinson used to say to his students: "Gentlemen, you are just as good now as you will ever be." Preparation is not a merely abstract thing, a matter of the intellect alone; it is an actual doing something for the Lord. And that kind of preparation we can surely make here. Let us test our future by our present. "Now is the judgment of this world," for what we are now we shall in all probability be hereafter.

19. GIVING OURSELVES

A MISSIONARY at Benares in India tells us of a long line of steps leading down to the Ganges, the sacred river. Along the way are a number of images of repulsive and immoral gods. Along this same way are three pairs of weighing scales—one of brass, another of silver, and a third of gold. A comparatively poor man comes along and puts himself in the scales. In order to secure the favor of his god, he has to put in an amount of brass that will balance his own weight. When the scale goes up he goes free. Then a merchant who is well-to-do appears; he has to take the silver scales and give his own weight in silver. But when a great Indian prince or noble comes, he must use the scales of gold, and give his own weight in gold.

This is an illustration of heathen self-sacrifice. The heathen gives something for himself, but he does not give himself. What a contrast to the giving of the true Christian! Paul tells us that the saints of Macedonia "first gave themselves to the Lord," and only then made their gifts to his cause. Instead of giving something *for* himself, the Christian gives *himself*.

George Adam Smith tells us that in one of his travels in France he met a Roman Catholic priest who had just come back from the Congo in Africa. After some conversation the priest told him that he had come home to make his last visit to his mother. "But why do you call it your last visit?" said Pro-

fessor Smith. "Oh," he replied, "do you not know that the average life of a missionary priest on the Congo is only two and one-half years? I am going back there, but I never expect to return. So I am making my last visit to my mother." "Why then do you go to the Congo at all?" asked Professor Smith. And looking him squarely in the face, the priest answered: "The life that I now live in the flesh I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Here was a Roman Catholic priest who did not give his weight in brass or silver or gold, but who gave himself with all that he had and all that he was. What a lesson for us! It is not brass or silver or gold that God asks of us; he asks that we give ourselves—body, soul, and spirit—to him and to his work. Follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Have the same spirit in you that was in him. Give your whole selves. That is real Christianity.

20. WORSHIPING CHRIST

When our Lord appeared on earth, the first act of men was an act of worship. The magi from the East brought their gold and frankincense and myrrh, and worshiped the infant Saviour. And the last act performed when he ascended on high was an act of worship. At Bethany, as he was carried up into heaven, the disciples whom he left behind worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. But all along, from the beginning to the end, there had been acts of worship. These were occasioned by men's feeling of need, as when the leper came and bowed at his feet, requesting help; or by new conviction of his power, as when on the Sea of Galilee the storm was calmed; or by deliverance from doubt, as when Thomas at the last recognized the crucified and risen Saviour and cried, "My Lord and my God!" The worship of Christ is a constant feature of the New Testament narratives. And Pliny tells us that the early Christians were accustomed responsively to sing hymns to Christ as God.

I fear this element of worship in our religious assemblies is being neglected, if not wholly lost sight of. The Roman Catholic Church and other liturgical churches give great emphasis to worship, whereas we too often treat worship as a mere preliminary to preaching, and thus count the oral proclamation of the gospel of more importance than the lifting of the heart of an entire

congregation to God in adoration and devotion. Our evangelical churches need first to bring the soul into communion with God, if they would secure proper regard for the sermon. Outward forms, such as responsive readings and the saying of the Lord's Prayer together, as well as the hymns of the church, are important stimulants and aids to worship. The man who comes to church only from a sense of duty may greatly gain by his going, and the outward performance of duty may be the occasion of an uplift of his soul to God.

What about private worship? Dear brethren, do we worship Christ in private? Is it not too often true that we come to the Lord only for what we can get? There is too much of a utilitarian element in our prayers, and we see little use of praying unless we want something from God. That is a mistake. We ought to pray, if for nothing else than to worship the Lord. Furthermore, our worship ought not to cease until we are confident that it is accepted. Often we only begin to worship, and we get no benefit because we do not hold on long enough. Worship attains its end only when a link of connection is formed between us and the Lord, only when at last we know that he hears and answers. And, therefore, let us not only add the element of worship to our prayers, but let us keep on praying, until we are sure that we are joined to Christ and that he has accepted our worship. Only in this way does worship reach its best and truest end.

21. LIVING AND LIFE

One of the leading characteristics of modern Christianity is the emphasis which it puts upon right living. Religion is becoming more practical. The theology of Lyman Abbott, the editor of the *Outlook,* will not in all respects stand criticism. Yet Lyman Abbott represents one great truth, and that truth gives influence to all his writing and work. Christianity is more than talking or thinking or doing. It is a life. This is the truth in R. J. Campbell's theology which makes it powerful, in spite of much misunderstanding of Christian doctrine. Campbell is a man who knows Christ. He has been brought into communion with Christ, and he feels that the world is to be saved only by dependence upon Christ.

But we need to add something to all this—I mean the personal presence of our Lord. What we want is not simply an abstract life, but the presence of the living Christ within us. "That life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, . . the faith which is in the Son of God." "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." This was taught by the Lord himself. "Come unto me," says Christ. "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Stephen, at his death, cried to Jesus, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He called upon the name of the Lord. That was characteristic of the early Christians. They believed that the risen Christ was with them. They recognized a

present Saviour, and in that present Saviour they recognized the presence of the personal God.

The recognition of a new life in the believer, and of a present Christ as the source of that life, is the most important feature of modern Christianity. If we can emphasize it, and can realize it in our own personal experience, we shall have not only a safeguard against modern skepticism, but also a real and inexhaustible source of power.

22. A JOHANNINE CHARACTER

As I walked along the street the other day a woman stopped me and handed me a paper. I took it and passed on, thinking it was some advertisement. But, on opening it, I found that it was a tract telling me how I must be saved. The incident reminded me of the man who was handed a tract of that sort and who said, "Why, I am a theological professor!" "Oh!" was the reply, "don't let that prevent you!" But I was grateful that a woman could do that on the streets of Rochester. Without doubt such service has turned many a man's steps into the way of righteousness.

And this story in turn reminded me of Doctor Osgood. I valued Doctor Osgood very highly, and always thought of him as one of the most truly Christian men I had ever known. He did not finish his college course, but left Harvard at the end of three years, though he afterward received his degree. He then went South to his father's plantation on the Mississippi above New Orleans. The produce of sugar on the estate was great, and the estate itself was worth three hundred thousand dollars. But at the close of the war, when the United States troops had taken possession and had despoiled the property, he cleared only fifteen thousand dollars from it all. Fortunately he married a rich wife in New York, and so made up for his losses.

I suppose he went South to succeed his father and to manage his business. The father was an aristocratic Southern planter, with plenty of family portraits and family plate, entertaining guests by the score and given to hospitality. Doctor Osgood grew up in these surroundings. Going back to this environment and trying to become acquainted with his new duties, he rode up and down on the estate. One day, as he made his way on horseback, the Spirit of God laid hold upon him, and he was smitten to the earth, just as Paul was. It was one of those wonderful, old-fashioned conversions. The sense of sin and the saving grace of Christ so overwhelmed him that he could no longer be a sugar-planter. He had to be a Christian and a minister of the gospel.

So he came North and entered the Baptist ministry, although his father was an Episcopalian. His first pastorate was in Flushing, on Long Island; his second was in New York City. But, when he began to preach, he discovered that his preparation was not sufficient. He needed to know more of the Bible. He determined to study the original languages in which the Bible was written. He adopted a heroic method of learning Hebrew. He went to a Hebrew rabbi, took him to his own house, kept him for a whole year, and had Hebrew for breakfast, dinner, and supper. He read through the Hebrew Bible three or four times; he could talk and write Hebrew, and his knowledge of the language probably surpassed that of any other teacher in our seminaries. But he wanted more Hebrew still; so he went to Germany, studied Hebrew at Heidelberg, and then came back to be professor of

Hebrew at Crozer, and member of the Old Testament Revision Committee. After a time he came to us, and was an honored professor in this seminary for twenty-five years.

Doctor Osgood was like the apostle John in temperament. He either loved or hated. He loved God and hated the devil. He loved truth and hated falsehood. He was exceedingly quick to perceive untruth. He had no sympathy for the higher critics, and was hardly willing to grant that they had any truth to their credit. To the end of his days, though he was a man of great learning, he was somewhat lacking in breadth of view. But he was a lovable man and devoted to Christ.

His reverence for the Scriptures, and his firm conviction that none but Christ can save, had great influence over our students. Many alumni, on their return to Rochester, have gone to his home to greet him and to thank him. He died of mere weakness of heart and without pain. In his last moments his daughter bent over him to listen to his last words. His voice was scarcely above a whisper, but she heard him say: "The sting of death is sin." He was too weak to finish the sentence, and so she added: "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory!" When the doctor heard that he lifted his head and, with his last breath, cried, "Victory! Victory!" Only a Christian could say that in the very moment of death. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

23. MY SALVATION

THESE are the closing words of that wonderful Ninetieth Psalm: "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known my name; he shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him; with long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation."

These last words are the most wonderful words of them all. They mean for us as individuals not only salvation from external penalty and death, but also salvation from internal defect, internal aberration, internal weakness; in short, from all that is now involved in sin. All this is to be part of God's salvation.

To many of us in our best moods, admission to a state where we shall no more sin against God is one of the noblest conceptions of heaven. Deliverance from all evil of the flesh, from weakness of memory, from short-sightedness, incapacity, and slowness of faith; yes, from all appurtenances of our present state of sinfulness—such a deliverance would be indeed a divine salvation, and such a deliverance is promised to all who join themselves to Christ.

God's plans for us include not only, negatively, an emancipation from all evil; but also, positively, the restoration of our nature and the glorification of it, so that we shall be like God in moral character and in ability to serve him.

But God's salvation is much more than our own salvation. We are parts of a whole. We do not live for ourselves alone, and God's salvation includes others as well as ourselves. It is the salvation of those nearest to us, those in our whole circle of relationship, those with whom we are bound up in the bundle of life.

Moses prayed that God would forgive rebellious Israel, and if not, that God would blot him out of his book. Paul could wish that he were anathema from Christ, for his brethren's sake, his kinsmen according to the flesh. Our salvation would be no salvation if it were not also salvation for those we love.

Finally, the real Christian is not satisfied unless this salvation is also the salvation of the world. God's salvation includes the complete redemption of the world through Jesus Christ. I rejoice in that prospect, and the longer I live, the more I rejoice. Here in this world, with all our aspirations and attainments, how little we really accomplish! How much more there is to be done! We long for the triumph of God's cause. As yet we do not see it. But God says, "I will show him my salvation."

God's salvation will include all we long for here. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." This great future is ours, if we are one with Christ and devoted to him. There is much yet to be done, but God sees all, and has included all in his plan of salvation, and he will bring the whole world, as well as the whole church, to the feet of Christ.

24. NONCONFORMISTS

THE portrait of Lloyd-George in *The British Weekly* shows the man at his best. He is a member of a Baptist church, and he glories in being a Nonconformist. I have been meditating on that title. It is a word taken from Scripture: "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your minds." It is a great word, because it represents a great idea: Stand out against the things that are wrong, in spite of the traditions of the past. Be faithful to your own conceptions of right, as you find them set forth in the word of God. Let justice be done, though the heavens fall.

Lloyd-George is a typical Nonconformist. He is the most popular statesman in England, yet in some respects he differs with the government. In the matter of the suffrage, for example, he is quite in advance of Mr. Asquith, since he is going to provide a chance for debating the claims of women in the next government program. And we see progress in English politics, when we remember that Mr. Asquith himself is a Nonconformist—a Congregationalist—and that he and Lloyd-George have much to do with the appointment of bishops in the Church of England.

Nonconformity appeals to us as Baptists. We are not governed by traditions of the past which are not conformable to Scripture. There we stand, God helping us. That is our program of conduct, polity, and

doctrine. Wherever Baptists have held to that, they have succeeded, and so long as they hold to that, they will succeed in the future.

This idea of nonconformity is applicable to heredity and environment, which so many think are dominant things in life. We are not obliged to succumb to these influences around us. Our business is to resist, when we find that heredity and environment are leading us in the wrong direction. "Be not conformed to this world." It is distressing to read George Eliot. She intimates that we are bound by our environment, and that there is no help in God or man. She gives us no chance to resist. But we know better. We *can* resist. Out of evil we can bring good. "Be ye transformed, by the renewing of your minds." This is a possibility because God is with you. He will listen to prayer. He will enable you to overcome the influence of past heredity and present environment, and even the influence of your past sins, in so far as they have wrought themselves into your character. For "whom the Son makes free, he is free indeed."

25. NOT CHRIST'S GIFTS, BUT CHRIST

A THEOLOGICAL student complains that he has been seeking peace, purity, power from on high, but that his efforts seem fruitless. Doubting and discouraged, he fears that he is on the wrong track, and he desires to know what he shall do.

And the answer is just this: This man has been looking for external gifts from God, and he has forgotten that God's one gift is Christ. While he has been looking outside for this thing or that, for this communication or that, he has been ignoring the fact that the one unspeakable gift of God is Christ himself.

We must look within rather than without; to Christ rather than the gifts of Christ. The one thing needed is faith, absolute surrender of ourselves to Christ, the opening of our hearts to take the one great gift of God, which includes all other gifts. For when we have Christ we shall have all things in him.

Christ is the way; he is the truth; and that, because he is the life. Sometimes it requires a long experience of fruitless struggle to be drawn to the one and only source of light and peace. Before I myself learned this, it was but a plodding, burdened, fearing, distressful way in which I did my Christian work. I had none of the joy that normally belongs to the Christian life. But when I pondered over the words, "I am the vine; ye are the branches," and began to appreciate the fact that the early disciples were full of hope and power,

just because they realized that Christ was in them, and that the life they lived they lived by faith in the Son of God—then I learned the secret of Christianity, and it wrought a great transformation in my experience.

We need to learn this, in order to insure the highest joy and success in the ministry. God uses imperfect instruments indeed, and men who had yet much to attain in knowledge of divine truth have, notwithstanding, won others to Christ. The man who has gotten hold of even a fragment of Christian truth, and is himself conquered by it, can do something to conquer the world. But the more truth he has, and the more completely he understands his relation to Christ, the more power he will possess. And so I hope that in our theological seminaries men will get hold of this mystery of the gospel, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Get that, and you get all the rest.

26. MY WITNESSES

In the McNamara trial at Los Angeles, I have been astonished to observe the difficulty of the government in securing the necessary witnesses. Is it because men fear personal violence, or because they are reluctant to testify against former associates? Have they no feeling of responsibility to the State, or desire to protect the innocent? Only yesterday I saw that a theological student had been subpœnaed in a murder case, and because he thought it entirely optional with him whether or not he appeared, he got himself into trouble.

"Ye are my witnesses," says Jehovah. I confess that if I did not feel myself subpœnaed as a witness, I would not be here to-day. When my brother invited me to go with him in his private car to Florida, I thought it would be delightful to get away from the cold, especially as I had been recently suffering from an attack of the grippe. But I reflected that I was a witness for Christ, and that I was called to testify here. So I still hold on.

That is the feeling of our missionaries who are still holding on. I received a letter from Mr. Speicher in China the other day, which was very illuminating with regard to conditions there. There are missionaries who fly from danger, but there are others who regard danger as God's call to bear witness for him. Let us remember these faithful men and women in our prayers.

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27. THE TRUE TEST OF CHARACTER

WHAT we really are is shown, not so much by our overt acts, as by the natural trend of our thinking. "Out of the heart are the issues of life," and "As a man thinketh, so is he." Yet the application of this test to ourselves is one we are rather loth to make, because it is so very convicting. How about my thoughts, when I have no special intention to control them? How about my dreams, are they always pure? How about my designs, when I am left entirely to myself? Is God in all my thoughts? Or is it true that God is *never* in my thoughts, except when I force myself to think of him?

This is really the test as to what I am, in my inmost heart. My subconscious moods, my underlying tendencies—these show what I would be, but for the grace of God. It is for these, more than for any external acts, that I ought to repent. Yet for these, I often do not hold myself accountable. We tend to absolve ourselves of just about nine-tenths, or I might say ninety-nine hundredths, of all our sins. But when we come to Scripture, we find that it requires nothing less than our being like God in thought, as well as in word and in deed.

At the beginning of the New Year it is an excellent thing to make an inventory, just as business houses do, and ask, not how our friends look at us, or even how we look at ourselves, but how God looks at us. Do we

love God with all our heart? What a serious question that is! "Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, . . think on these things." There are plenty of good men, plenty of good books, plenty of good pictures, plenty of good thoughts, that we may keep in mind. Yet, when we yield to our inmost impulses, is it these good things that we are occupied with? That is the question.

Some modern writers hold that literature and art represent reality, the world as it is. "Art for art's sake," they say. In literature, we have many a novel which seems to be bent on getting down into the slums, and on setting before us all the wicked and diabolical aspects of human nature. What kind of art-gallery would that be which represented actual life and not the ideal element in life? It would be an awful place. Are we going to have in our art-galleries all the vice and ugliness and devilishness of mankind?

It is all a question of our own nature. We must cultivate purity, high thought, and noble aspiration. These help to ward off evil. Whatsoever things are pure, and whatsoever things are lovely—on these we are to think. Let all the rest go!

So we shall be following Christ. The evil things of the world had no place in his mind. And in order that we may gain the utmost of mental health, and may have the incoming and indwelling of the Holy Spirit—how singular it is that he is called the *Holy* Spirit, the Spirit of purity!—we need to be very careful about our thoughts. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." "As a man thinketh, so is he."

28. THE REPROACH OF CHRIST

It might seem as if, in this day when the Cross has become a monument and symbol of advanced civilization, there would be no such thing as the reproach of Christ. Yet, as a matter of fact, there is a subtle tendency in that direction, and there is much of that tendency in us. A child is outspoken and demonstrative; he blurts out his thoughts; if he likes you, he extends to you his sympathy and affection; if he does not like you, his dislike is usually quite manifest. He does not conceal his emotions. But, as he grows older, he gets ashamed, shuts himself in, and considers it a reproach to be himself. And Christianity has fallen into a similar evil habit. The early Christians had the outspoken element, the demonstrativeness, the rejoicing testimony, of childhood; but, as the church grew, it became selfish and corrupt, and its early enthusiasm and outspoken manifestation came to an end.

What a picture that is of our own hearts! In our early Christian life there is the revival spirit; the joy of the Lord is our strength. Then things grow dim, and we become ashamed of our demonstrativeness. We need to get back to our original simplicity; and we only can, when the Lord takes full possession of our hearts, and we return to our first love.

We are also getting ashamed of our Christian doctrine. We shy off from those passages in which the teaching of Scripture is so explicit. We are not will-

ing to concede that we are such desperate sinners. Bible teaching about sin is discounted. Is it untrue? No, it is the truest philosophy of human life, and instead of being a "reproach of Christ," the Cross is still the only way of salvation. But instead of being a glory, to some pastors and church-members, it seems but an outside, incidental matter. They are ashamed of the Cross.

How is it with our own personal lives, our conversation with others, our participation in religious meetings? Are these outspoken, free, the natural expression of what is in us? When we have the Spirit of God, we cannot but speak forth the things which we have seen and heard. There is a power resting upon us that compels utterance. Our emotions then are so strong that we cannot help speaking out, and thus other people see something of our inward life and are influenced by it.

Let us pray that "the Men and Religion Movement" will bring about this result. If I understand it correctly, its purpose is to convince Christian men that they should put into their Christian lives the same intellect and energy that they put into their business. If the men in our churches could only see that the Lord wants in the service of the church all that they have of emotion, will, and organizing ability, what a change there would be! Let us pray that God may send forth his Holy Spirit to bring men back to that state in which they will not be ashamed of Jesus, and in which they will "count the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt!"

29. THE INFLUENCE OF EVIL

MANY of you have heard of Bro. M. C. Treat, of Washington, Pa., an object-lesson and example to our business men, a millionaire, but more than that, a generous and large-minded Christian. He has had at times as many as a hundred men either studying for the ministry or laboring on mission fields, whom he was partly or entirely supporting. He has given fifty thousand dollars toward the Retiring Ministers' Fund of two hundred thousand dollars, which has recently been collected, and it was his offer that made possible its collection.

Mr. Treat has written me a letter deploring the case of Richeson at Cambridge, wondering whether the seminaries were not to blame for admitting and graduating such men, and whether he himself had not made a mistake in giving them so generous support. I am very sorry to have the heart of this man, one of the noblest, most outspoken, outgiving men in our denomination, struck by such a blow. We ought to pray for him, that the Lord will still give him the disposition to continue his good work, and to help the cause of the Christian ministry.

How little we realize the harm that a single bad man can do—ruining two families, and putting upon them a stigma of disgrace which will remain to the end of their days; damaging a church, so that it cannot get over the evil influence for a whole generation;

placing a stigma upon his own seminary, and upon all seminaries, faculty and students alike; and inducing in the most generous givers a doubt whether it is safe to grant further help to any one preparing for the ministry.

Who is responsible for all this? Are we, who admit men to the seminary? I think not. We do the best we can. We would not receive a man whom we deemed unfit, and we would not keep a man here if we had reason to believe that he was a bad man. I wrote to Mr. Treat this morning, and this is what I said: I told him that among the twelve apostles, in spite of the presence and instruction and influence of the Lord himself, a little more than eight per cent went to the bad; and yet the Lord did not give up the work of preparing men for the ministry, nor did he cease calling men into it. If there was a Judas among the Twelve, it is even more possible that there may be a Judas among the hundred and twenty of any seminary. We do not know who the man is. And further, the Lord's church in spite of all still lives on. Christ is still finding good men to serve him, and many of the good are kept good by these very examples of failure. The lesson is a solemn one. In our own hearts we have the same impure impulses that have led many a man astray. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Let him look, more humbly and earnestly than ever before, to the fountain of all grace, and let him depend on Christ alone for life and salvation.

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30. REGENERATION IN EXPERIENCE

When I was converted, I had no thought of the Spirit of God as working upon me. It seemed to me that I was working out my own salvation. I made my decision to serve God, and, so far as my consciousness was concerned, that was the end of it. If I may express myself in theological terms, mine was a genuinely Arminian experience.

But, after I got out into active Christian life, I found the way to be very hard. There were difficulties within and obstacles without. I soon discovered that it required more than the strength of my own will to keep me firm in my allegiance to Christ. Then the thought struck me that, if I could not keep in the way of following Christ without God's help, how could I ever without his help have gotten into the way at first? There must have been something more in my decision than the strength of my own will. While I realized that we must work out our own salvation, I learned that God also works in us to will and to work, for his good pleasure. Thus there dawned upon me the doctrine of regeneration, and I learned the meaning of the Saviour's words: "Ye must be born again."

It is my firm conviction that the doctrine of regeneration is the truth of God, because I derive it not only from Scripture, but from my own experience. We first learn our absolute dependence upon God; then we learn of God's regenerating grace. This is the

basis of our Baptist belief and polity. And this is why we reject infant baptism. The saving of men is God's work in the human heart, and we must have evidence of God's work in the heart before we admit men to the Christian church.

31. THE SONG OF MOSES AND OF THE LAMB

Was it John Bunyan who, when he saw the murderer led out to execution, said, "There, but for the grace of God, goes John Bunyan"? I am not sure that it was John Bunyan. But there is something in that saying which is very impressive, and which we can apply, every one of us, to ourselves. The germs of sin are in us. Our natural selfishness, our disregard of others, our wrong impulses of many sorts, are manifest, the moment we examine our own hearts. Even Goethe, who certainly was not a Christian man, could say of himself: "I see no fault committed, which I too might not have committed." If Goethe, with his imperfect spiritual vision, could say this, how much more ought the enlightened Christian to see in himself the beginnings of all evil!

When I look into my own experience, I am very grateful that there is such a thing as the preventive providence of God. By this I mean those divine interpositions which have prevented the outgoing of sin, the germs of which were in my heart. What I wanted to do? Yes, but what, after all, I did not do, because by some special interference of the Spirit of God my conscience was aroused and I said, "I will not." The wish and the will are very different things. I may be conscious of many wishes for evil, and yet I may say, "I will not."

What is it that enables us to take the side of the will,

rather than the side of the wish? It certainly is not our own feeble nature, nor the underlying desires of the heart, but a new impulse given by the Spirit of God. God can, and he alone can, prevent the development of evil, in spite of its existence in the heart.

When the Israelites got to the other side of the Red Sea and stood on the shore in safety, they saw their enemies completely overwhelmed. They sang praises, not to themselves, but to God. It was not their own right hand, nor their own strong arm, but the right hand and the strong arm of God which had given them the victory, and they gave praise to him.

In the book of Revelation, when the saints of God stand on the heavenly shore, they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. The victory which they have gained is not due to their own righteousness, but to the preventing and overcoming grace of God. So, they connect their own life-history with the early history of God's people. It is the song of Moses, as well as the song of the Lamb. Even the first victory over sin, as well as all victories since then, have been due to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And at last, when we have been redeemed, when we have been completely rescued from the jaws of destruction, when we see how our evil impulses have been curbed and overcome, then we too will say that not to ourselves, but to the Lamb are the honor and the glory, and we shall place the crown upon the head of our great Redeemer.

32. GRATITUDE AND CONSECRATION

A BEAUTIFUL story has come down to us from antiquity. It is the story of a Christian peasant. The love of Christ had imbued him with a love for all things that God had made, both great and small. It so chanced that this peasant came in contact with a lion, afflicted with a thorn in his paw. The peasant extracted the thorn, relieved the lion, and the lion conceived an affection for his helper. But that is not the whole of the story. After a time this same peasant was apprehended as a Christian, was condemned to death, and was brought into the arena to be devoured by a lion. And to the great surprise of all the spectators, when the lion came forth from his den to devour the man, instead of tearing him in pieces, he fawned upon him, licked his hands, and showed every sign of affection. It was the same lion that the peasant had helped, and the lion had remembered his benefactor.

Whether the story is true or not, it teaches us the lesson of gratitude. I am impressed more and more with the great sin of ingratitude, of forgetfulness of others, of neglect to render back what we can, in the way of return to those who have done us good. And since next Thursday is our annual day of prayer for colleges and seminaries throughout the world, that occasion has suggested what I have been saying.

Next Thursday will be the fortieth day of this sort

at which I have been present in this seminary. Only once have I been absent, and that was because I had to be out of town. As I look back over those many years and reflect on the blessings that have attended us in so many ways, I feel deeply grateful for the goodness of God. I hope that next Thursday will be a day of real acknowledgment.

In the old times, fifty or a hundred years ago, it was common among Christians to set apart days for fasting and prayer. I never took so much stock in the fasting, because, when I fasted, I lacked the strength for prayer. Perhaps others had better experiences than I myself had. We should certainly give proper attention to the matter of diet, so as to have our minds clear for devotion. It is worth much to reflect continuously on the blessings of God, and then to conclude a new covenant with him.

One thing I would like to have every one of you do next Thursday, and that is to record yourselves. Take part in the meetings; set your faces anew, both inwardly and outwardly, as witnesses for Christ. Then you may date from that day a new beginning of your Christian experience. Let us make it a day of gratitude and consecration.

33. CONFESSING CHRIST

CONFESSION is more than profession. It is profession in the face of difficulty. The Roman Catholic Church has much to say about confession, but its confession is almost altogether a confession of sin, and it is only a confession to the priest. Christian confession, however, is not simply a confession of sin; it is also an acknowledgment of the Lord's mercy, and a telling to others what the Lord has done for us. It is not confession to a priest, nor to an official of any kind, but to the world. Many people are quite willing to confess privately to an official, but are unwilling openly to confess their offenses to those whom they have offended.

Confession is the mark of a true Christian. "Every one who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven." But confession is not simply confession with the lips. The apostle Paul stated the matter rightly, when he said: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Confession is to be a confession of the heart; a confession which springs naturally to the lips; a confession in which we utter what we have seen and heard. Every great emotion clamors for expression. If we are not moved to expression of our emotions, we should stop and ask ourselves whether our emotions are justified.

The great lack in the Christian church to-day is the spirit of confession. We are too content with ceremonialism, with the ordinary services of the church, with a receptive and passive Christianity. The telling to others what the Lord has done for us, the winning of others to Christ by a word of tenderness and love —how infrequent that is! How important that ministers should set the pace for others, and should be an object lesson in speaking to others. The man who does all his work in the pulpit is not doing his work properly. He must go to others, and out of the depths of his own experience, speak to them of their need of the grace of God. This will give a sense of reality to his ministry. The first duty of the minister to every one he meets in private is to talk about religion. At the first interview he should indicate by some word or sign that his chief concern is the salvation of the soul.

Robert Browning's poem, "The Martyr's Epitaph," is a vivid picture of early Christian confession. The determination to let one's voice be heard for Christ, and to confess his name so long as life lasts—that is the spirit of the true Christian minister. Nothing is more needed than this in our colleges to-day. If the Christian men in them only had the spirit of confession, the colleges would be revolutionized, the country would be redeemed, and days like those of the early apostles would come again. Let us make this a subject of prayer to-day.

34. THE PERPETUITY OF THE CHURCH

MUCH has been said of late about the collapse and disintegration of the Christian church. We have a distressing propaganda of this sort in our own city. It is not a new phenomenon. All the infidel writers of past ages have prophesied the destruction of the Christian church, and the ultimate giving up of the Christian faith. Yet most of these writers are in their graves, and the church still lives on. So it will be with those who deride the efforts of the church to-day. Our Lord said, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock" —not on Peter as an individual and self-contained personality, but on Peter as united to Christ, and as a believer and confessor of his truth—"on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

I well remember the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Montreal. Going in there one day, I saw, over the confessionals ranged on both sides of the church, some quotations from that same passage of Scripture. One of them read: "Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." But those words presuppose the possession of Christ's Spirit. Only as the church is joined to Christ and is filled with his Spirit, has it authority to loose and bind on earth. It is a grave question whether the Roman Catholic Church can claim the fulfilment of this promise. Does

it show the faith of Peter, and does it repeat his simple confession? Or is some other gospel proclaimed at Rome?

But let us not content ourselves with criticizing Roman Catholics. Let us examine ourselves. The question is: Have we that faith? Do we make that confession? Do we cry out from the depths of our hearts, as Peter did, "Thou art the Son of God," and then do we submit to Christ our hearts and lives? Do we confess that faith before the world, as Peter did? If the church can answer, "Yes," then the church shall live. Even though there may be imperfections in doctrine and in life, yet, with that faith and that confession, the church shall live.

Prophecies of the church's dissolution come only from men who themselves are not connected with the church; who do not understand the spirit of the church; who have not, and never have had, the faith of the church. Such prophecies make very little impression upon me. I believe in a Christ who is the same yesterday and to-day and forever, and I believe that he will reign till he has put all his enemies under his feet.

35. INDIAN SUMMER

I WAS much interested lately in an interpretation of the phrase "Indian Summer." The Indian is a great procrastinator. He never does to-day what he can put off till to-morrow. So he hunts and fishes all through the summer days, and not till the snow falls is he frightened into preparation for the winter that is before him. The Indian Summer—the Indian's time of real anxiety and labor—comes only after the first fall of snow.

There is a great homiletical lesson to be derived from this. We are natural procrastinators. What we dislike to do, we usually put off until some future time. The only safety is to do at once what our hands find to do. This is especially true of our preparation for eternity. How many men there are who keep putting that preparation off, until finally death comes, and no preparation has been made!

Some one has said that it takes a great deal of imagination to be a Christian. If we mean by imagination the power to anticipate the future, to get out of this deadly present, to grasp the things of the spirit, why, certainly, some imagination is necessary. Imagination is a great help in the religious life. Not only with regard to our individual salvation, but also with regard to the work we are doing on earth, is imagination necessary. If we had not some anticipation of the results that are to come, some faith in the

power of Christ to subdue this world, there would be no great missionary impulse. But, because we see the future in the present, and because we see that Christian effort is bound by the Spirit of God to conquer the world, we have hope and courage.

Our Lord Jesus had more imagination than any other human being who ever lived on earth. When the crowd of Samaritans came to him, he told his disciples to lift up their eyes and behold the fields white and ready for the harvest. He saw the harvest even in the sowing of the seed. He, the sower, and the apostles, the reapers, already rejoiced together.

This is one of the great incentives to missions. The faith which is looking forward, the hope that the small things will become great, the assurance that the Lord by the power of his Spirit will make the weak things mighty, the conviction that the whole world will be given to Christ for his inheritance—this is the spirit of missions, and this is the secret of their success. In the strength of this expectation we cease to procrastinate, we value the passing moments, we work while it is day.

36. PEW-RENTING

In my last pastorate I found that one-third to one-half of our membership had no fixed seats in the house of worship. The result of not having regular places in the sanctuary was that, when the members did come, they had no motive for bringing their children and friends, and thus each Sunday we had many empty pews.

When the time drew near for our annual pew-rental, I bethought me of a remedy. I wrote a circular letter to all the members of the church, in which I set forth the advantage of having a place in the house of worship that a man could call his own. I showed the usefulness to the family of sitting together in the house of God. At our pew-rental, which soon followed, we had quite an addition to the number of persons who took pews. Yet forty seats were not taken.

So I said to the treasurer: "Get a horse and buggy, and go with me each afternoon, until we have visited every member of the church who has not taken a pew." This cost the treasurer quite a little time and money. But he did it. We had the list of names and of streets; we made ourselves as interesting and persuasive as we could; and our visits did a great deal of good, entirely apart from the main object of our call. We impressed upon our members the advantage of having seats of their own, and of adding this incentive to regularity in church attendance.

The result was that every seat in the church was taken, except a few far back under the gallery. We had previously reduced the price of pews, and they were now graded from one hundred down to five dollars a year. Thus no one could offer the excuse that he could not afford the expense. And the next Sunday it looked as if we had doubled our congregation. The spiritual value of the change was very great besides.

The pastor could not do that every year, and possibly he could not do it in every church. But the pastor has sometimes to do things which he does not like to do, just because no one else is willing to do them. And I believe that such things can be done in many churches, if only they are done in the right spirit, and with the help of the Spirit of God.

37. AN INEXHAUSTIBLE BIBLE

In my college days, a certain theological student returned from preaching his first sermon in a little country church, and went round mourning. His friends asked him, "What is the matter?" He replied that he could never preach again. "Why?" they asked. The young man answered that he had told all he knew; he had outlined the whole Christian system; and there was nothing left for him to say. All of us, I fancy, have at one time or another felt in a similar way. I remember days in my early ministry when it seemed as if I could never make another sermon. All my material was used up.

After a while we put away our fears. We learn that, though our own resources give out, the Bible is inexhaustible. It is full of treasure. Years of exploration and discovery only reveal to us more completely its divinity. It abounds in instruction and blessing. The man who believes God's word finds it a lamp to his feet and a light to his path. If he does not spend his time in merely critical research, but tries to get something out of the Bible for his own heart's needs, he will surely find that it answers every real demand of his soul. What touches him will touch others also. The Lord will never leave him without a subject, a truth, a word, which will be a blessing to others.

Let me read to you a passage from Isaiah: "The

Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him that is weary; he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught. The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord Jehovah will help me; therefore have I not been confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame."

That is good news for a young minister of the gospel. It is just what we need. The Lord makes the weak to be mighty. He gives us external truth in the Scriptures, and his Holy Spirit turns the outer word into an inner word that enlightens and rejoices our hearts. He not only furnishes us with the written message, but he gives us insight into its meaning, so that we can unfold it to others, and make it the power of God for their salvation.

38. GOD'S INITIATIVE

One of the marks of a true Christian experience is that it gives all glory to God. The recognition of God's initiative in human salvation is a most important element in Christian doctrine. I heard a sermon last Sunday morning on a great text, and one on which I never heard a sermon before: "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus." It is due to God that you now belong to Christ. It is not something that you can credit yourselves with. At the beginning of your Christian life, it was not your decision alone that made you a Christian. When you look back and contemplate your career, you cannot say, "This is great Babylon which I have built." There is no room for human pride, no room for self-complacency. All good that is in us comes from God. The influence that was brought to bear upon us at the time of our first decision to serve Christ, as well as the environment that helped that decision, were both due to God, and not to ourselves. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them."

One of the defects of our modern hymn-books is that they do not enough emphasize the grace of God in human salvation. I well remember a hymn which used to be sung in our churches, but which is now left out of our hymnals. A verse that was sung when I was a boy is this:

Why was I made to hear Thy voice
And enter, while there's room,
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?

'Twas the same love that spread the feast
That gently forced me in;
Else I had still refused to taste,
And perished in my sin.

It is God who makes us willing in the day of his power, it is to him that we must ascribe the praise. Salvation is of the Lord. That is the scriptural doctrine. We have no right to claim anything for ourselves; all the glory belongs to God.

39. COMMUNION WITH GOD

COMMUNION with God is not a one-sided matter. It consists not alone in our speaking to God, but equally in God's speaking to us. In fact, our speaking to God is of little value, unless it is a sort of response to God's speaking to us.

A most trying and unpleasant person to deal with is one who insists on doing all the talking, and who will never leave a loophole for a remark of your own. The first Napoleon once said: "Madame De Staël is a great conversationalist; she is a whirlwind in petticoats." It is said that she made a call on a lady of distinction, and the visit lasted two hours. The lady on whom she called never got a chance to say a single word during all those two hours. But, at the close of the interview, Madame De Staël rose, and said, "What a delightful conversation we have had!" So it is with many good people, who think that our speaking is the only element in communion with God.

Unless we first hear God speak, our own speaking does not have much meaning. If God has not revealed himself to us, we do not have the impulse to pray. In this matter, the reading of Thomas à Kempis' "Imitation of Christ" is instructive. Read a page of it every morning. You will find that it consists entirely of conversations between the believer and his Saviour, and that almost always it begins with a word of Christ, to which the believer responds. We may well

follow that model in our private devotions. I hope that every one of you has his daily time for devotion, and that he reads his Bible, not for merely scholastic purposes, but in order to get something for his heart's good. Begin with a reading of Scripture; read till some verse arouses a thought to which you respond; then turn that thought into prayer.

One of our great difficulties is the lack of originality in prayer, the habit of saying over and over again the same old phrases. How can we make prayer a reality? Let me advise you to tack your prayer on to some word of God, or to some hymn that you have been singing. Make the first sentence of your prayer the echo of the last line of that hymn; or, better still, the echo of the last verse you have read from the Bible. So doing, you will find prayer to be a reality. The Bible and the hymn-book will furnish all the material you need.

Communion is God's speaking to us, as well as our speaking to God. We need first to hear God speak; then we shall have the true impulse to prayer. When we know not how to pray, or what to pray for as we ought, then the Holy Spirit will help us with his higher wisdom. The more we throw ourselves upon God, the more we trust his impulses within us, the more we read his word for thoughts to occupy our minds and suggest our prayers, the more blessing prayer will bring. True prayer has two sources: the word of God suggesting prayer, and the Spirit of God assisting prayer.

40. ALL FULNESS IN CHRIST

In the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, Winston Churchill, the novelist, has an article entitled "Government and Christianity." He claims that Christianity thus far has been theoretical rather than practical, and that our present need is the application of Christianity to such matters as labor and capital. The implication is that Christianity, as represented in our churches to-day, is altogether too narrow, and that we must add to it the teachings and practice of biology, sociology, economics, and of modern science in general.

There is a grain of truth in this. Faith without works is indeed dead. But there is also error. Works are only the fruit of which faith is the germ. We need add nothing to Christianity to make it effective. These applications to modern needs are only manifestations of the inner power of Christianity itself. We have not yet seen all that is involved in Christ. The more we study him the more we are convinced that he fills all in all. His Spirit is to pervade all government and all society. Modern sociology is but an application of the old gospel. Christianity can justify itself; we need not import into it anything from outside. Christ has in his girdle the key to unlock all the doors of this universe. On his head are many crowns—the crowns of politics, sociology, literature, art, as well as the crown of individual salvation.

Another article in the same magazine has a similar tendency. It is by Dr. Jesse Benedict Carter, the accomplished and learned director of our American School for Classical Studies in Rome. He has been studying early Christianity and its connection with the heathen religions. He finds that the Orient brought into Rome many new ideas. Persia, Greece, Egypt, all contributed some of their philosophy. Doctor Carter asks whether the time has not come for uniting the East with the West, and for adding to Christianity what India and China can give.

There is a grain of truth in this also. Christ has not as yet been fully apprehended. The immanence of God, the one truth which has given currency to pantheism, in spite of its many errors, has not been emphasized sufficiently by our religious teachers. We are only beginning to see that we live and move and have our being in God. In the Orient there is a caricature of the doctrine of God's presence in all things. But only in Christ do we see a moral interpretation of that idea. The Gospel according to John gives us the true idea of the contemplative Christian life, the life that is hid with Christ in God.

Is Doctor Carter right in holding that we find among the Hindus an addition to Christianity? Instead of this, the oriental religions only enable us to see our unappreciated possessions in Christ. The idea that Christ is not sufficient, that Christianity is not comprehensive enough for the world's needs, that we must get something from heathen religions and from modern science that is not in him—all this is a great mistake. We can learn something from heathen religions and

from science, but what we learn will not be an addition to Christianity; it will simply be the opening of our eyes to the fulness which is in Christ, which has always been in Christ, and which the world is just now beginning to understand.

41. THE MACCABEES

Religious history has no episode more thrilling or inspiring than that of the Maccabees. In the unsettled times between the Old and the New Testaments, Antiochus Epiphanes, that monster of iniquity, sought to Hellenize Judea, to suppress the book of the law, and to set up the image of Jupiter in the holy place of the temple. There was one reverend old man of the Hasmonean family, and his five heroic sons, who bound themselves to stand for the law until death. They summoned Israel to fight for the true religion. Thousands gathered round them, and though father and sons all perished, the tide of heathenism was turned, and Judaism took on a new life.

Upon their banner were inscribed these words from the book of Exodus: "*Mi Camoka Baalim Jehovah*" —"Who is like unto thee, Jehovah, among the gods?" And the initial letters of these first words in Hebrew, "M C B," according to an old derivation, gave us the name "Maccabees." I am not sure that this derivation is correct, but I am sure that the example and influence of the Maccabees will never be lost to the world. Their deeds and their sufferings constitute the final instance of religious heroism recounted in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews. That chapter has been rightly considered the most splendid literary passage of the New Testament. It is a magnificent piece of eloquence and pathos in praise of faith.

"Who is like unto thee, Jehovah, among the gods?" With that motto they conquered their enemies and brought deliverance to the chosen people. What better motto could we have than just that? If we have the Lord for our leader, our strength, our portion, then nothing can stand before us. The deeds and the works of men shall perish, but those that are wrought with the help of the Spirit of God shall last forever.

42. ELECTION AND SELECTION

A PATHETIC story, which I cannot vouch for as history, may possibly answer to the actual experience of some one here to-day. A boy grew up in a Christian family, where he heard his father's prayers from day to day, but was not greatly moved by them. At last, however, there came a wave of religious influence, and he was converted. All his views of life, all his thoughts of the future, were changed. For the first time he wished to make something of himself. It dawned upon him that he ought to have a larger mind, that he ought to do a greater work, that he ought to get an education, that he ought to go to college.

But his father and mother were poor; there was a heavy debt on the little farm; their son was their only dependence; he could not be spared. How could he leave his father, and enter upon a course of study, in such a time of pressure and distress? It weighed upon his mind, so that he could not eat, drink, or sleep. But he could not open his heart to his parents. At last the burden became too great to endure; his parents thought some serious illness had come upon him. So he told them his secret: he wanted to go to school; he wanted to become a minister. But how could he, when his service was needed at home?

Then something wonderful happened. To his amazement, both father and mother broke down, and said: "Dear boy! that is the very thing we have wanted

ever since you were born. We gave you to the Lord from the first, but we wanted no plan of ours to be forced upon you. We wanted your decision to be the Lord's work; else it would not be worth while. We are willing to economize, and to make any sacrifice, to help you carry out your desire."

I suppose there are many cases like that. At any rate, one or two things are taught by such a story. We may learn from it the true nature of prayer. The boy at last comes to lay his request before his parents, moved by an inward impulse which he feels to be irresistible. He begs for the opportunity to study for the ministry, and he finds that his father and mother have been wanting him to do that very thing ever since he was born. Prayer is perfectly consistent with the ordaining mind and will of God. The prayer offered to the father and mother was perfectly consistent with their long-cherished plan for their child. But those parents never would have carried out their plan if the child had not himself requested it. Election is conditional upon selection.

There is yet another lesson. Prayer can be our deepest, most earnest desire, while yet that prayer is, all unconsciously to ourselves, the fruit of influences around us from the beginning of our lives. Selection on our part is consistent with election on the part of God. The long anxiety of those parents, and their destining of their son to the ministry, issued at last in his own longings, his own decision, his own prayers. Selection is the result of election. Our working out of our own salvation is the fruit of God's working in us, to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Let us not doubt the value of prayer, and its congruity with the reign of law and the will of God. In our human relations, prayer to friend or father is not inconsistent with the reign of law. And there is nothing to prevent us from believing in the propriety of prayer to God. Every true prayer we offer is effective, just because it is in accord with the divine will. God prepares us, and urges us on, to just the requests we make. When Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you," there was nothing arbitrary or irrational in his promise. We ought to expect from God answers to our prayers. His Holy Spirit prompts prayer, and, because he prompts it, he can answer it. Yet he will bestow no blessing unless we ask.

43. PRAYER TO JESUS

Prayer to Jesus is the natural result of belief in his deity. If Christ is God, then he is the object of prayer. If he is with us alway, according to his promise, then he is the object of prayer. If he is a personal and almighty Saviour, then he is the object of prayer. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, addresses "all who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," for such prayer was the characteristic mark of Christians. Calling on the name of the Lord Jesus had its first illustration at Stephen's martyrdom, when he cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Stephen prayed to Christ, just as Jesus himself, when he hung on the cross, prayed to the Father to receive his spirit.

There is great comfort and blessing in praying to Jesus, for Jesus is the manifested God, deity brought down to our human comprehension, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and engaged in the work of our salvation. Jesus himself says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," so that, in praying to Jesus, we pray to God. Yet, in prayer to Jesus, there is a special feeling of brotherhood and fellowship. We need to add this to our Christian life. The hymns of the Christian church more nearly represent the theology of experience than do the dogmatic statements of the theologians. The hymns come out of the heart. We sing, "Jesus, lover of my soul"; if we sing to Jesus, why do we not pray to Jesus?

It marks an advance in our religious experience when we realize the presence of Christ in the hearing and answering of prayer. Prayer to Jesus is indeed a test of a truly evangelical faith. Many are reluctant to pray to Jesus, because they have not accepted the deity of Christ as they ought. Just as our words and works react upon our inner feelings and beliefs, so prayer to Jesus will react upon our faith, and will make it more firm and strong.

Our most successful evangelists and our most trustworthy leaders of Christian thought have learned the lesson of prayer to Jesus. Those who preach only a negative gospel, who do not preach Christ directly, but rather deal with the applications of Christianity, are seldom heard to address Christ in prayer. But the best types of Christian preaching and of Christian life are found among those who recognize Christ as a present Saviour, a Saviour who can hear and answer when we call upon him. "Come unto me," says Christ. Prayer to Jesus is simple obedience to his command. "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Prayer to Jesus is sure to receive its answer.

Of course, I do not mean to say that every prayer should be addressed to Jesus. Our hymn-books show us the proper proportion. I do not refer to Unitarian hymn-books. Some years ago, I went to one of our great universities to preach. There was no hymnal; a few hymns only were printed on a card. I wanted a hymn to suit a sermon on Christ, but I found none. The only suitable hymn had been expurgated, and the verse, "Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes," had been omitted. When I look into the hymnal of a

Unitarian church and find no hymns in which Christ is worshiped or recognized as an object of prayer, I feel as if the central truth of the gospel were left out, and the collection were an empty void. Christ is all in all. He is our only hope. "Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to thy cross I cling"—that is the experience of the Christian heart. Let us express that experience by our recognition of Jesus in prayer.

44. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

MANY years ago I met a man whose spirit attracted me very much. He made me feel that he was living near to God. I wished to learn the secret of his holy life. He must surely be a prayerful man, I said to myself. So I asked him: "How about your life of prayer? How much do you pray? When do you pray? Do you have stated seasons for prayer?" And he replied: "I do not depend so much upon stated seasons. I have seasons, but most of these are in the middle of the night. I pray most when I wake in the night and lie on my back in my bed. But I have learned to pray all the time. I pray when I walk on the street, or when I talk with a friend, and I believe the best prayer is the ejaculatory prayer: 'Lord, help me!' 'Help me now!' 'Teach me what to say!' 'Teach me what to do!'"

When I heard that, I thought, "There is Nehemiah over again." You remember Nehemiah in the presence of the king. He wanted to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. He seemed so sad that the king asked what it was that troubled him. He had hardly a moment of time to reflect; he must answer the king instantly. Yet in that brief moment he lifted his heart to the God of heaven, and then presented his petition to the king. That was a momentary prayer; but the result was the restoration of the temple service and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. It does not

take long to pray. If Peter, as he was sinking in the waves, had made as long a prayer as some people think necessary, he would have sunk in the sea, and there would have been no more Peter. But his brief prayer, "Lord, save, or I perish!" did actually save him.

The prayers we offer here in this prayer meeting are specimens of the prayers that ought to characterize our lives. We should live in a constant atmosphere of prayer. That is what Paul means when he urges us to pray without ceasing. We can make our whole life a life of prayer. We can enjoy the presence of Christ, and that presence can become a part of ourselves. We can repeat the experience of Paul, and say with him: "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." The sense of our independent existence has fallen into the background, and another life has taken possession of ours. The life which we now live, we live in faith, the faith of the Son of God. And that is the true life. Independent life is the sinful life, and is not what God intends for us. He intends for us a life of communion with himself—that is, the life of constant prayer.

45. THE PRAYERS OF JESUS

I HAVE never heard a sermon on the prayers of Jesus. Yet what a wonderful subject this is! "The Prayers of Jesus." He prayed; he prayed continually; his life was a life of constant prayer. Yet there were special times, when he seemed to need the help of God in an unusual way. At the baptism, with the temptation before him, and all the struggles of his ministry confronting him, he prayed, and so was fortified to meet the assaults of the tempter. When he chose his disciples, he prefaced that epoch-making choice by a whole night spent in prayer. On the Mount of Transfiguration, in his greatest exaltation, he prayed, that the glory might shine forth from him; in the Garden, in his deepest humiliation, he prayed, so that his sweat fell to the ground in great drops of blood. He said to Peter, thinking of his inconstancy and his dangers, "I have prayed for thee"; and he doubtless prayed for all his disciples, even for Judas.

There is a great lesson for us in this. We might say that, if any human being could get on without prayer, it must be the perfectly holy One, in whom God dwelt as in no other. But no! he was in a state of dependence, and so he prayed. His life of prayer is our model. If he needed prayer, how much more do we!

Many of the objections against prayer—that prayer has only a reflex influence, that it has only subjective

effect, that it cannot alter the decrees of God—all these come to nothing when we consider that Jesus prayed. The plans of God will never be executed unless we pray. But the plan of God includes our prayer. God decrees, but we must decree also. God has decreed to save the world, but he will not save it without us. We have our part to play in his plan, and his salvation comes about through the agency of his church, his ministry, and his followers everywhere.

All our preaching is vain, if we do not give the impression that we are men of prayer, that we live in communion with God, that we expect our prayers to be of use. In every meeting for prayer, we ought to come saying that something will be accomplished to-day, and that the prayer we offer will have effect. Our wills enter into history. Through our wills God's will is done. Nothing of value shall come to the Christian church except through prayer.

God's Spirit moves upon us to pray, and when we yield to his monitions, something will come of it. When we know not what to pray for as we ought, then the Holy Spirit helps our infirmities; when words fail us, then the Holy Spirit helps us to pray. The joy of the Christian life is this, that God takes possession of us, and fulfils his plans in us by teaching us to pray. The great petition of the Christian life is "Lord, teach us to pray." The successful man is the man who prays. His labor is not in vain in the Lord.

46. PUBLIC PRAYER

Several of our State Conventions are realizing that prayer is a very important part of their meetings. I do not suppose that the apostles could ever have had a meeting without supplication to God. But too often our denominational gatherings have given much time to reports, to addresses, to discussions, but very little time to prayer. Is there not even a danger that prayer will be given a secondary place in our ordinary public worship? Do we not sometimes hear the early part of a Sunday morning service spoken of as preliminary, as if it were only an accessory or incidental of the sermon, and as if the preacher's words were of more value than prayer to God?

A great advance will be made in our churches if every minister will think as much about the prayer he is to offer as he thinks about his sermon. Let him carefully prepare it. Too often the prayer preceding the sermon is a merely extemporaneous performance, into which no real thought, no longing of heart, no energy of will has entered. We need to set the pace for our congregations, by giving them an object-lesson and making a business of prayer. If the minister shows that his very soul is engaged in prayer, he will waken a responsive chord in every heart.

I listened to Spurgeon at the beginning of his ministry, then later at the height of his fame, and again shortly before his death. At the end of his ministry

he was not the same man that he was at the beginning. He had gained in reverence and in culture. Responsibility had sobered him. Preaching was his education. His sermons were remarkable, but he was best in his prayers. He prayed in a way almost seraphic, as if God was there, and as if he had hold of God's very throne. The eloquence and uplifting influence of those prayers was beyond anything I have ever heard.

If the minister is in real touch with God, and is absorbed in prayer, his prayers exert an influence which men cannot resist. When the disciples heard the prayers of Jesus, there was something so powerful, so impressive, and yet so attractive, that they were moved to say, "Lord, teach us to pray." True prayer is contagious; it draws us to God; it compels us to seek the gift of prayer for ourselves.

47. GOOD FRIDAY

THIS is "Good Friday." Let us remember that the brightness of this beautiful day is purchased for us by the darkness which came upon the whole earth nineteen hundred years ago. Doctor McLaren has well said that a Christianity without a dying Christ is a dying Christianity. Without the Cross, by which our reconciliation to God was brought about, there would be no Christianity. Without the Cross, Christianity would be a merely speculative doctrine, like Stoicism or Epicureanism; would have a little time upon the earth and then pass away.

Our former professor, Doctor Hackett, never tired of showing how, in each of the four Gospels, one-third of the book is occupied with the death of Christ, and the two-thirds preceding are only preparatory, and leading up to that sacrificial death. Why have we not, in the Acts of the Apostles, one-third of the book devoted to the death of Paul? Simply because that is a matter of no moment. It is of no importance whether Paul reached his death in one way rather than another. We are not told when he died, or even that he died, because his death has no special significance. But the death of Christ is the center of Christianity: yes, the whole of Christianity, and for that reason Paul could say: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

To understand the Cross, and to preach the Cross,

is the one great business of the Christian minister. When we begin our ministry, we should ask ourselves, "What is to be the one theme of our preaching?" It should be Paul's theme; we should know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. The doctrine of the Cross will have its application to all the departments of human life.

The center of our religion, the center of God's revelation, is the Cross. The poorest washerwoman, the meanest scavenger of the streets, who knows the Cross of Christ, and has found salvation there, understands the secret of the universe better than all the scientific men who have ever lived apart from Christianity; knows more about God, his purpose in the world, and the object of human life, than do all the unregenerate philosophers and sages. The Christian, however poor he may be, black or white, lettered or unlettered, is more an object of respect and honor than any godless king upon his throne. This is the Christian view of the world. With eyes opened by the Holy Spirit, we come to understand the real significance of things.

I am not much of a ritualist or a ceremonialist. I would not distinguish any particular day as sacred. Yet this one day has a greater claim upon us than any other. It is more truly the Christian day than is Christmas. We do not know precisely when Christ was born. It was more probably in October than on the twenty-fifth of December. During the winter the shepherds would hardly be out in the fields at night. But the Jewish Passover we know. So we know Good Friday, and we know Easter. We know the day of

Christ's death, and we know the day of his resurrection. We can locate this day, and there is good reason for observing it. Meditation on the death of Christ, on the very day on which he suffered, may be very profitable to us.

EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

48. PAUL, A PRISONER

I HAVE been struck by that verse of the apostle in which he calls himself, "Paul, a prisoner." It seems as if, at the beginning of the phrase, he thought only of the earthly side of it, and then suddenly caught a glimpse of the heavenly side, "Paul, a prisoner—of Jesus Christ." He attributes his imprisonment, not to an earthly, but to a heavenly, authority; he is in bonds by Christ's orders and for Christ's sake.

It reminds me of the experience of Rutherford, that great Scotch preacher and pastor. In the days of persecution he was exiled from his charming parsonage and imprisoned at Aberdeen. In his imprisonment he wrote a multitude of letters, and these letters have become an influential part of our Christian literature. How did he date those letters? "From my Lord's Royal Palace of Aberdeen." His prison was the palace of the Lord. He was there in Christ's interest, and Christ would see that he accomplished more there than he could ever accomplish by his preaching at home.

And that was the case with Paul. While imprisoned at Cæsarea and at Rome there must have been times when he wondered at the providence of God in the matter. Yet the epistles which he wrote in those imprisonments have gone out to all the world, and have accomplished infinitely more than he could have accomplished by his own ministrations in person.

In his imprisonment at Rome, Paul declared that he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him. Why then did he not sever his chains and break his bonds, and so triumph over his enemies? It was because those bonds and those chains were the bonds and chains of Christ. Christ had ordered them for his own purpose, for some larger end than Paul at that time could see.

Did Paul ever anticipate the world-wide circulation of his letters? It probably never entered his thought. Paul expected the speedy coming of the Lord; in his earlier ministry he even thought that he might live himself to witness Christ's advent. The long course of Christian history was certainly not open to his gaze. He could not foresee that from his prison his writings would go forth to the ends of the earth and to the most distant times. Yet he could say: "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." How much better than Paul's expectations was the result which the Lord had planned!

Our duty is to do our part and to work where the Lord has put us, even though it may be in a narrow place, and amid enemies and obstacles which we cannot overcome. Let us believe that all is ordered by the Lord. Through work, through imprisonment, through difficulties, through danger, through death itself, Christ will make all things work together for our good and for the triumph of his cause. Let us rejoice when we are prisoners of Christ Jesus!

49. BEARING CHRIST'S CROSS

SIMON, the Cyrenian, must have been greatly discomfited when he was compelled to bear the cross for Jesus. He was coming into Jerusalem at that early morning hour on business of his own. It was no help to him to meet that file of Roman soldiers as they led out a criminal to execution. Nor were those soldiers gracious to him, when they forced him to turn about, and to bear the cross—did I say, *for* Jesus? I almost think we ought to say, *with* Jesus, for it is not absolutely clear that Jesus was relieved of the whole burden. Simon was perhaps required only to help the Saviour bear it. It was a great discomfiture to Simon, but it seems to have made a deep impression upon him, for afterward we read that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, who were Christian disciples. It may be that the sight of the suffering Saviour drew out Simon's heart, and made him one of Christ's followers. I am very sure that, after the Saviour's resurrection, what at the time had seemed a humiliation became the greatest glory of Simon's life. He had been permitted to help Christ in the bearing of his cross.

It is a picture to us of the burdens that are involuntarily laid upon us—burdens which we resist at first, because they are not comfortable or pleasant, but which afterward we see to be appointments of our Lord. How many men bear burdens of sorrow, trouble, death, on account of others for whom at first

they think they are not responsible, but in whose faults and sins they find themselves inextricably involved!

I think of George William Curtis, one of the lights of our literary firmament, who spent many years of his life in paying the debts of an insolvent father. The son was not legally liable, but his father's honor was involved, and so, when he might have himself become a rich man, the son gave all his earnings to clear off that father's obligations. I think of General Grant, who felt himself dishonored by the debts of a son who had speculated in Wall Street, and had lost his own and his father's fortune. The general felt that the honor of the family required those debts to be paid. So he went through his great house in New York, brought out the gifts made to him by kings and princes, and sold them all, to free the name of his son from stain.

Those were burdens of debt. But there are many other burdens. To bear them unflinchingly, with a high sense of duty to God, requires more than ordinary faith, more than ordinary courage. At some time or other we shall have such things to meet, and our success in life will depend on our meeting them in the proper spirit. Let us take upon ourselves the burdens which are laid upon us by the Lord. The providence of God has permitted, and in that sense has ordained them. They all intend good to us, and glory to our Saviour. We shall find such burdens to be a blessing, and we may even find them to be a great reward.

50. THE LOSS OF THE TITANIC

In the bright sunshine, there is nothing more beautiful than an iceberg. It is fairly glittering. Some years ago, on the ocean, I saw at one time a dozen icebergs that were like mountains. They towered two hundred feet above the surface of the water. But the sense of beauty became almost a terror when I remembered that seven-eighths, yes, eight-ninths of those masses were below the surface. When you see a piece of ice in your goblet, you will notice that the proportion above the surface is astonishingly small.

The portion of our life that is open to consciousness is correspondingly small. Tennyson writes of the "abysmal depths of personality." Our deepest life is hidden even from ourselves. In that hidden region are our greatest dangers and our greatest sins. "Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom." Only God can "create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me."

When a ship strikes an iceberg, it is just as if it struck a rock. I do not understand how the Titanic could have met with such a disaster. Surely the captain must have known that the region he was in was full of ice. Unless there was a heavy fog, there was no excuse for running into one of those bergs. The ministers of the gospel are, in a similar manner, pilots of souls, and are responsible for the spiritual wel-

fare of those over whom they have charge. We are stewards of the mysteries of God, and we must render up an account for their safety.

How pathetic it is that the greatest ship ever built should have gone to the bottom on her maiden voyage, and that one thousand six hundred souls in her should have perished! What a lesson it is for us! We are starting out on a journey across the sea of life; how little we know of the difficulties and obstacles before us! We need divine illumination and direction. "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah!" should be the prayer of every heart.

51. PREVENIENT GRACE

THE old theologians talked of "prevenient grace"—grace that lays hold of us before we know it, and prepares us for the emergencies of the future. Each one of us can now perceive that things before our conversion had a meaning which did not occur to us at the time. I had in my parish in Haverhill, Mass., a young man who afterward became a member of my church. I took an interest in him, for before his conversion he was the most godless and profane fellow in the town. He had great physical vitality, was hearty and popular, but he never opened his lips without an oath.

During our Civil War he enlisted in the navy, and he was on the ship that passed the forts at Mobile. Admiral Farragut was in the rigging, directing the course of the vessels and their fire, through all the terrible bombardment. At the end of that fearful day, this young man looked back upon his experiences, and said to himself: "How strange it is that I have not sworn to-day! I have not uttered a single oath. What can be the reason? It must be that I was afraid to meet God. What? Am I such a coward as to blaspheme, when I think God is at a distance, and yet to be silent when I think he is near? I will not do that again. I will not swear any more." And he did not. He dropped the habit then and there. But he was not yet converted.

After the victory, the ship sailed to New Orleans. There some of the sailors had a furlough and went ashore. This young fellow went ashore also. But, before going, he said to himself: "Every time I have been ashore so far I have got drunk. I wonder if I could for once come back sober. I will try." He did try, and he succeeded. A short time afterward a chaplain came aboard, who was a real evangelist. He got the men together and held a meeting, in which he made an appeal for Christ. The first man who asked for prayers was this young man from Haverhill. A downright conversion followed. The past was given up forever. He became not only himself a Christian, but an evangelist on the ship, and many through his influence were converted. He came back to Haverhill and joined my church. When he came before us to relate his experience, he said: "I think the Lord was with me when I first made up my mind not to swear. God laid hold of me then, though I did not know it."

I have no doubt that the Spirit of God prompted that preparatory act. We ought to recognize the wonderful leadings of God in our experience. "He bringeth the blind by a way that they knew not." We can now recognize God's preparatory discipline, though we did not understand its meaning at the time. And much that we do not yet know, we shall know hereafter. Some day we shall see that God makes all things work together for good.

52. THE LORD WILL PROVIDE

I HAVE heard many sermons on the text, "The Lord will provide," but some of them have missed its essential meaning. You remember that these words are found at the close of the narrative about Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. Isaac sees no provision for the burnt-offering. But the Lord provides it. "The Lord will provide"—will provide what? Why, the sacrifice. Abraham cannot provide it. He has nothing acceptable to God; nothing but what God has given him; nothing but what is stained by his sin. God himself provides the ram for a burnt-offering.

It is the picture of the one great sacrifice for sin. God asks no human sacrifice. He offers for us his only Son. In his infinite grace and love, God has himself provided the offering which makes sinners acceptable to him, and which they cannot themselves provide. If we ever preach on that text, let us be sure not to leave out that essential thought.

All other things God will naturally give to us, as incidental to his one unspeakable gift. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things." All things are ours, if God has given us Christ. All other things are involved and included. All things work together for our good, since we are Christ's and Christ is God's. All our temporal wants, as well as our spiritual needs, are provided for, because

the gift of Christ has preceded them. But only as we accept him, have we hope of receiving these things also.

It is our privilege to put all our affairs into the hands of God, believing that our wants will be supplied. When I go to the grocer and buy a pound of tea, the grocer does it up, and I say, "How much is this?" He answers: "Fifty cents." "But," I say, "you have not charged for the paper and the string." "No," he replies, "that is included; I make no charge for that." So God has given us Christ, and in Christ he has included everything else. God, who provided the ram for a burnt-offering, will provide all we really need both for time and for eternity.

53. THEISM OR ATHEISM?

THERE are only two kinds of belief in the world—theism and atheism. Real belief in God is the only religion. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." How far we are from believing that God is! A God who is far away is not God. A God who was in the past, and is not now, is not God. To believe that God is, in the present tense, is to believe that God is here and now, with all his attributes and powers; is ready to hear our prayers; and is willing to do more for us than we can ask or think. That is theism; that is belief in God; and there is no alternative to that, but sheer atheism; for there is no logical halting-place between the two.

There is a great deal of atheism in our experience. We do not recognize God in the affairs of our daily lives; we do not recognize that his Spirit is in our hearts; we do not recognize that he has revealed himself as a just God and a Saviour; we do not recognize that he is in the whole continuous process of history; we do not recognize that he is making all things work together for good. But all this is implied in theism. I know nothing that we need to pray for more than for faith in a present God. Jesus taught this faith when he said: "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." And he has made this faith possible to his followers by his promise: "Ask, and it shall be given

you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened."

We have no excuse for atheism. Faith in a living God ought to be more real and powerful to us than are any conclusions of science or philosophy; for God has wrought that faith in our hearts by his Holy Spirit. Yet we need to pray constantly, "Lord, increase our faith!" for we are always tempted to substitute a sort of half-atheism for real theism.

What I desire above all else for this Seminary is this faith. Let this be a place where faith in a living God controls both the external instruction and the internal life! If we can only become conscious of a present God, all else will be of little account. Then men will go out with the assurance that God is with them, and that all things are possible to them because they believe in him.

54. PROPHET, PRIEST, KING

THEOLOGIANS have grouped the offices of Christ under the three heads of Prophet, Priest, and King. It is a natural arrangement, for this is the order of Christian experience. We begin by thinking of Christ as prophet or teacher. This is the kindergarten stage of our religious knowledge, valuable as preparing the way for something better. This is the way in which the apostles, Peter, James, and John, began. Christ was to them a prophet; yes, the greatest of prophets.

Then comes the thought of Christ as priest. I need something more than a teacher. I need one who can make atonement for my sin. One can hardly say that his experience has become truly Christian, until he rests upon Christ as his propitiation, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world by himself bearing their guilt and penalty.

Is that the end? No, we must go further. Christ is king also. How many Christians there are who trust Christ as a teacher or prophet, and as a saviour or priest, but who have not yet come to see in him their Lord and Master; do not see that all they have belongs to him; that their duty is to follow him through life and death; and that they are called to be his agents in rectifying the evil of the world and converting the world to him!

Is it not interesting that, at the crucifixion the one inscription over the cross was, "This is the King of

the Jews"? That title includes both the others. If Christ is King, then he is both Prophet and Priest also. And is it not interesting that on the cross Jesus fulfilled all prophecy, made the one great priestly sacrifice for sin which the offerings of the old dispensation symbolized, and then, at the same time, even in the hour of his forsaking and humiliation, was King of the world?

There is something very wonderful about that crucifixion of Christ. As you think of it, it gathers up the whole revelation of God. It is the unveiling of God's heart, so that Paul can say: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Have we fully realized, and do we practically exemplify, the kingship of Christ? Are we not more slow to accept the lordship and sovereignty of Jesus in our daily experience than we are to recognize the prophetic and the priestly offices of Christ? I think that the church of Christ is gradually coming to see that he is Lord. And this is a sign that the Spirit of God is abroad in the earth, for no man can say that Christ is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit. God's final aim is to make us his willing subjects, and "Thou art the King of glory, O Christ!" is the last and best confession of the Christian heart.

55. ABOVE ALL THY NAME

A VERSE in the One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Psalm once greatly puzzled me. I used to wonder what was meant by the text, "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Dr. George Matheson, however, gave me a clue to its meaning, and I give it to you. "Thy name" is here the revelation of God in nature; "thy word" is the revelation of God in Scripture. In the Seventy-fifth Psalm we read, "That thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare." God's works in nature and in providence seem to be in the psalmist's mind when he says, "that thy name is near." And God magnifies his word above all his name, by fulfilling his promises, even more punctually and exactly than he orders the ongoings of the physical universe.

Let us look into this saying a little more closely. What can be more regular and dependable than the succession of cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night? We order our life, we form our plans for the future, in perfect confidence that the series will be unbroken. Though the ungodly scientist may scoff at our credulity, we see in these successions the proof that "thy name," O God, "is near." And the scientist himself is stricken with wonder when he sees the chick developing from the egg, or when the far-off star crosses the spider-line of his telescope at the precise instant of his prediction. All this looks like the move-

ment of a divine finger, or the mandate of a divine will, and the scientist is filled with awe, as if in the presence of a living God. Even he is forced to say with the psalmist, "That thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare."

But there is something better than this. God's faithfulness to his promises is even more marked than his faithfulness in nature. "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Nature can be different from what it now is, for it is the revelation of power and will for a temporary purpose; and, when it has fulfilled that purpose, it will pass away. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." Every jot and tittle of it shall be executed. For God's word of promise rests, not upon power or will, but upon righteousness and love; not upon natural attributes, but upon moral attributes, of God. He is "faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins"; and, "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

It is a great comfort to know that the exactitude of physical law is not the last limit of God's faithfulness. His rule in nature is only the faint symbol of his rule in grace.

> Mightier far than strength of nerve or sinew,
> Or the sway of magic, potent over sun and star,
> Is love.

If there is a reign of law in the physical universe, there is even a higher law in the realm of spirits. God is a faithful Creator, and he will never forsake the works of his hands. What he has begun in our souls, he will certainly complete. Every word of promise

he has given us in Christ Jesus will be fulfilled. He will magnify his word above all his name. For

> His every word of grace is strong
> As that which built the skies;
> The voice that rolls the stars along
> Speaks all the promises.

56. FROM HIS PLACE

In exile and distress Ezekiel had a vision. He saw a restored temple, from which once more shone forth the glory of the Lord. It was the Shekinah, which had led the children of Israel through the wilderness, and which had dwelt between the cherubim. God was once again with his people. The prophet was filled with gratitude and exultation, and cried in his rapture: "Blessed be the Glory of the Lord, from his place!"

What is the glory of the Lord? It is the revelation of the Most High, the manifestation of his attributes, the shining forth of his light. Is there any place where this glory shines forth? I answer that God is not confined to place; for he is above all space, as above all time. If he has place at all, it is because he has chosen that place for his special manifestation. Though the heaven of heavens could not contain him, he yet manifested himself in the Shekinah of the tabernacle and the temple. That was a physical manifestation; and, with the tabernacle and the temple, it has passed away. Is there any other glory of the Lord? Is there still any place in which that glory is resident? And is there any proper sense in which we may appropriate Ezekiel's doxology, and also cry, "Blessed be the Glory of the Lord, from his place"?

Yes, I answer, there is a spiritual glory of the Lord, far more wonderful than that Shekinah glory of the past. We can say, "Blessed be the Glory of the Lord,

from his place"—in nature. God has set his glory upon the heavens. Sun, moon, and stars are revelations of his wisdom and faithfulness. Dead things cannot act, and we are coming to see that matter is nothing but a manifestation of spirit—the work and witness of a living God. Chemistry and biology unite with astronomy in celebrating the praise of God in nature.

"Blessed be the Glory of the Lord, from his place" —in history. The onward march of civilization has had God for its Captain and Guide. He has led other nations, as well as Israel. There has been an education of the human race, a development of conscience, a growing sense of community. With the demonstration of human sinfulness and need there has been first, the preparation, and then the actual revelation, of redemption, in the historical life and work, death and resurrection, exaltation and reign, of Jesus Christ. We are living under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, who invisibly orders or overrules all the movements of society; and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. All authority in heaven and in earth has been given to Christ; let us recognize God's place in history.

"Blessed be the Glory of the Lord, from his place" —in the Scriptures. God has never separated himself from the revelation of his will, which he gave of old to his prophets and apostles. The Holy Spirit still takes the written word, and makes it his sword, to subdue the sinful heart, and to bring comfort and peace to the humble and believing. Let us recognize God's place in the Bible.

" Blessed be the Glory of the Lord, from his place " —in the Christian church, the great company of believers. With all her faults, the church is still God's chosen dwelling-place. He manifests himself to his people. Through his church, as his chief human instrument, he sends out his salvation to the world. Let us recognize God's place in the church.

" Blessed be the Glory of the Lord, from his place " —in the Christian house of worship. If God was willing to record his name, and to reveal his glory, in the tabernacle and the temple of old, much more is he willing to meet with his people, even where only two or three are gathered together. The very edifices where they meet become sacred to them by reason of his presence, and from them his truth and love go forth to bless mankind. Let us recognize God's place in the house of worship.

" Blessed be the Glory of the Lord, from his place " —in the human heart. Though God dwells in the high and holy place, he dwells also in the contrite and humble heart. Wherever we may be, God's glory may be in us, and may radiate from us. And all this, because Christ is in us. He is God's Glory in heaven above and in the earth beneath. He is the eternal Word, God's only vehicle of expression. Even before his coming in the flesh, he was the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person. In a true sense, Christ is God's only place, and God can be found only in him. Apart from Christ, no man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him.

The culmination of all God's revelations is in the

Word made flesh, of whom the evangelist can say: "We have beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." What the evangelist can say we too can say, if we have received Christ. Oh, wonder of divine wisdom and love! He who is the glory of God—in heaven, in nature, in history, in the Scriptures, in the Christian church, in the Christian house of worship—has taken up his abode within us, and has made us one with himself!

Because Christ is in us, we have the beginnings of glory here, and the certainty of glory hereafter. Because our hearts have become the dwelling-place of Christ, we can say with Ezekiel, "Blessed be the Glory of the Lord, from his place!" If we utter that doxology from our hearts, we shall not only praise God ourselves, but we shall also let the light of his salvation shine forth from ourselves to others. Really to bless the Glory of the Lord is to cooperate with Christ in bringing the world to accept of his redemption. Let us recognize the place of God in our hearts!

57. THE MEANING OF PENTECOST

The book entitled "Acts of the Apostles" is misnamed. It really records the acts of Christ after his resurrection, as Luke's Gospel had told of the things which Jesus "began both to do and to teach" while he was here in the flesh. I once asked our Prof. William C. Wilkinson whether, in his judgment, Paul's Epistles had equal authority with the words of our Lord when he was on earth. Doctor Wilkinson surprised me by replying, "Greater authority!" And he explained by saying that Christ's discourses on earth were only the early lectures of his theological course, while the epistles were Christ's later, fuller, and more profound disclosures of truth, when the apostles who once could not bear them had been prepared by the Holy Spirit for their reception.

This conception of the Acts of the Apostles, as the later revelation of the risen Christ, suggests the real meaning of Pentecost. That was the day in which the exalted Saviour took his earthly followers into union with himself, and endowed them with his Holy Spirit. From that time they did not regard themselves as independent beings, but as organs and instruments of the indwelling Christ. It was not they who spoke, but Christ who spoke through them. "For me to live is Christ," says Paul; "not I live, but Christ liveth in me." Christ became their source of pardon, of peace, of purity, of power. They rejoiced in the

Lord alway; that is, they rejoiced in their union with the living Christ, who taught them, and wrought mightily through them. They ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people.

We learn from this the nature of every true revival of religion. It is nothing less than a new entrance of Christ's people into union with himself. It can be prepared on our part by an entire consecration and an appropriating faith. Our Pentecost will come when we are willing to abide in Christ, and to have Christ abiding in us.

58. PERVIOUS TO LOVE

Ralph Waldo Emerson was not a great poet, though he was a great essayist. His sense of rhythm and of melody was defective. But he has left us one poem, namely, "Cupido," in which these elements of poetry are not lacking. The initial couplet of that poem is one worthy to live with the very best.

> The solid, solid universe
> Is pervious to love.

Emerson never wrote lines more beautiful than these. The word "pervious" is poetical, from its very uncommonness; while its negative, "impervious," is prosaically common. "The solid, solid universe" is poetical, just because it is a purely imaginary solidity which the poet has in mind. Emerson was no materialist, but an idealist rather. His philosophy regarded the universe as spiritual and alive. He was so much a believer in the immanence of God that materiality and impenetrability were to him only apparent qualities.

The poem which begins with these beautiful lines is as bad a specimen of theology as anything that he ever wrote. It is out and out pantheism. Let me quote it all, that you may see this:

> The solid, solid universe
> Is pervious to love;
> With bandaged eyes he never errs,
> Around, below, above.
> His blinding light he flingeth white
> On God's and Satan's brood.

And reconciles by mystic wiles
The evil and the good.

So evil and good are both the product of love. There are no moral distinctions. Like Thomas Carlyle, Ralph Waldo Emerson might well be a "President of the Heaven and Hell Amalgamation Society."

Still the beauty and the truth of those first two lines remain. They illustrate the power of even fragmentary truth to carry upon its shoulders an enormous dead-weight of error. Let us make the most of the good while we reject the evil. The "solid, solid universe" is not so solid as some barriers between souls. A man and his wife, though living for years together, may be more widely separated than they would be on different continents, with an Atlantic rolling between them. But "the solid, solid universe is pervious to love," and I have seen the love of Christ unite them.

"The solid, solid universe" is not so impervious as the hard and sinful heart. But the Spirit of God can turn that stony heart into a heart of flesh. I have been reading that remarkable book, "Twice-born Men," with its account of the transformation of ten men under the influence of Salvation Army workers in London. There were men walled in by heredity, walled in by environment, walled in by evil habit; mad with passion and drink; but the wall gave way; it was pierced by love; these men were changed, and were enlisted in the work of saving others. Let us only have the love—the love of Christ—constraining us; and then

The solid, solid universe
Is pervious to love.

59. SINGLENESS OF HEART

A MAN who had been courting a young woman for ten long years at last made her a definite proposition of marriage. She replied by letter that she accepted his offer unanimously. The jest was in right earnest. She had been divided in mind, if not distracted. Now she knew what she had to depend upon, she could be at peace. She could trust the sincerity and persistence of her lover, and her heart was fixed. So she gathered up all her powers, as it were, and with all her heart and soul and might and mind and strength she answered that she accepted unanimously.

One of the most charming characteristics of the early disciples was their singleness of heart. After the Holy Spirit had come upon them, we read that they "took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people." That singleness of heart is a virtue which we need to comprehend and to seek for ourselves. Our Lord has told us that "no man can serve God and mammon." There is no such thing as a divided allegiance in the Christian life. We cannot hold middle ground between truth and falsehood, between light and darkness, between Christ and the devil. I am reminded of the Emperor William's reply to one who represented himself as a "German-American." "German I know," said the emperor, "and American I know, but German-American I know not."

Yet there is a sad tendency in all of us to this very scattering of our powers. How often we fancy that we can be on the fence between good and evil! How often there is actual division of faculty—will warring against conscience, desire antagonizing reason! Most of the distress and failure in life are results of such conflict. There is no way to avoid it, but by clinging to Christ. Only in him do we find the unifying principle. But he whom the Son makes free, he is free indeed. To secure singleness of heart, let us pray to Christ, "Unite my heart to fear thy name!"

60. ALL MY SPRINGS

We can always learn something from our mistakes. We ought to be thankful to those who point them out, and so help us to correct them. But it is rather humiliating to a young minister, after his Sunday morning service, to have some good old lady inform him that he made a serious mistake in quoting Scripture. It will be well for him if he is able to tell her that if she will look into the Revised version she will find that his quotation was correct. It is important that we be exact in quoting Scripture. It is a good rule, in writing sermons, always to look up the precise words of a passage before we venture to put it into our manuscript.

I once came very near making another mistake. I had chosen for my sermon that beautiful verse of the Eighty-seventh Psalm, "All my springs are in thee." I had the impression that the meaning was that God is the source of all our strength. When I had written about four pages of my sermon it occurred to me that I had better look up the context. Then I found, to my discomfiture, that the text refers not to God, but to Zion; or, as I should interpret it, to the church of God. The church is our source of refreshment; as our Revised version has it, "All my fountains are in thee." So I had to tear up all I had written, and begin again.

But my second subject was as important, in its way, as was the first. We are dependent on the church.

God has made it his chief human instrument for the salvation of the world. When we trust to other societies to do the work of reformation, we are leaning on a broken reed. They are of use, only when they are agents of the church, and act in strict subordination to it. I advise rich men to give, first, to the church; secondly, to the training of the church's ministry; and only thirdly, to general education. The church has been purchased by the blood of Christ, and it is God's peculiar possession. Membership in the church is our greatest earthly honor, and our greatest human source of comfort and help.

But what is the church, upon which we are so dependent, and to which we are so bound? It is the great company of believers—those who are joined to Christ and possessed by his Spirit. Through this human agency God bestows his chief blessings upon mankind. Not the outward organization, but the inward spiritual life, is its essential characteristic. It is a dreadful travesty of this doctrine, when the church is thought to consist in its officers, or in its outward appointments. When Cyprian, the church father, said that no man could have God for his Father unless he had the church for his mother, he confounded the church with the hierarchy, and laid the foundation for all the impious assumptions of Rome. And when Ritschl makes the connection of the individual with Christ to depend wholly upon his connection with the Christian community, he is only repeating the error of Roman Catholicism.

There can be no Christian community, and there can be no church, unless there is first a Christ from whom

it draws its life. And the church is simply the externalization and extension of the life of Christ. The organization which is not penetrated and pervaded by his life is no true church of Christ. The text, "All my springs are in thee," means only that we are bound up in the bundle of life with all who truly love our Lord and Saviour, and that we are dependent upon them, as his intermediaries, for most of our strength and refreshment in our earthly pilgrimage.

See, the streams of living waters,
  Flowing from eternal love,
Well supply thy sons and daughters,
  And all fear of want remove.
Who can faint, while such a river
  Ever flows his thirst to assuage—
Grace which, like the Lord, the Giver,
  Never fails from age to age.

61. THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

In the third chapter of First Timothy we have without much doubt a quotation from an early Christian hymn. The saints of old seem to be singing in it:

> Manifested in the flesh,
> Justified in the Spirit,
> Seen of angels,
> Preached among the nations,
> Believed on in the world,
> Received up in glory.

It is evidently a description of the person and work of Christ. Christian rejoicing all centers, not in what the Christian does, but in what Christ does. And Paul declares that this truth with regard to Christ's person and work, of which the church is the pillar and ground, is the mystery of godliness, the secret of all godly living.

The tendency in our day is to seek effects without seeking causes. We would like the fruit, without the tree; the branches, without the root. We emphasize the applications of Christianity, but do not make sure that we have any Christianity to apply. The early Christians should teach us that doctrine comes first, as the indispensable stimulant to duty. Nothing but the truth of Christ will bring Christian living in its train. The mystery of godliness is nothing less than Christ himself.

Not however a merely external Christ. Godliness

requires a Christ within as well as a Christ without. Intellectual belief alone will not save. Outward morality alone will not save. The mystery of the gospel, as Paul says in the Colossians, is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." By virtue of our union with Christ, the Christian appropriates to himself and reflects in his own life, all the features of Christ's work. He is crucified with Christ; he dies with Christ; he is raised with Christ; he is justified in Christ; he represents Christ in the world; men believe in Christ in proportion as they believe in him; he sits with Christ even now in heavenly places; when Christ appears, he too will appear with Christ in glory.

The mystery of godliness therefore is the objective truth of Christ accepted and realized in our own experience. Not mere dogma, but dogma incarnated; not mere truth about Christ, but the personal Christ himself in the heart; this is the mystery of godliness, of which the early Christians sang, and which we will do well to recognize and realize; for godliness, the subjective effect, is impossible without Christ for us and in us, the objective cause.

62. LED IN TRIUMPH

The Authorized version makes Paul say: "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." This was a grievous misapprehension of the apostle's meaning. Our Revised version gives the correct translation: "Thanks be unto God, who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ." Paul rejoices, not in his own triumph, but in the triumph of Christ. Nay, more: he rejoices in his own defeat and subjection, since it adds glory to Christ's victory.

The Roman triumph was the most splendid spectacle of antiquity. The conquering general led the chieftains and kings whom he had subdued, bound with fetters of gold, and chained to his triumphal car. Offerings of incense were made all along the way, and these were a "savor of life unto life, or of death unto death," for they presaged release and honor to the submissive, but speedy execution to those who were still rebellious. All depended upon the sovereign will of the conqueror, and upon the surrender of their wills to his. The great procession entered into the temple of Capitoline Jove, and laid upon his altar the spoils of the campaign.

Paul sees in all this the symbol of his own relation to Christ. He had been Christ's enemy; he had been filled with hatred to his followers; he had persecuted them even unto death. But his Pharisaic pride had been humbled; his eyes had been opened; his will had been subdued. He now gloried only in that Cross,

which once had been the sign of shame and condemnation. With that crucified One he now identified himself—Christ had become his very life. And the greatest proof of Christ's power and grace was the fact that he, the chief of sinners, had been laid hold of and transformed into an apostle and representative of the Lord Jesus. Counting his legal righteousness as filthy rags, he now rejoiced to be led in triumph by Christ.

Yet the old translation, "causeth us to triumph," may still have a meaning for us. If Christ triumphs over us, we still participate in his triumph. Indeed, his triumph is the only triumph that is really possible to us. The self must die to live, or it only lives to die. It has been well said that we cannot tie the Milky Way to the tail of our kite. "He that findeth his life shall lose it," says Christ, and "he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." The only way to triumph is to let Christ triumph over us. If we will but merge ourselves in him, the glory of his triumph will be our infinite and everlasting reward.

63. PREACHING IS PROPHESYING

For some years I have spent portions of each summer in Great Britain. I have been interested in noting the difference between English preaching and the preaching to which we are accustomed in this country. I do not wish to undervalue our own work, but in some respects I think we may learn from our brethren across the water. In America we tend too much to the oratorical mode of address, while English preaching is conversational rather. We need to learn that the sermon is not an oration. It is not an object in itself. It aims at a result in the action of the hearer. Mere eloquence interferes with business, and so eloquence is coming to be out of place in the House of Commons.

Doctor Jowett, lately of Birmingham, but now of New York, is the representative of this conversational method of address. If he holds on in New York, as he has held on for many years in Birmingham, I think he will revolutionize the preaching of America. I recommend to you his "Yale Lectures on Preaching." Doctor Jowett is a model, not only in the way of manner, but also in the way of substance. Preaching, on his view, is the exposition of Holy Scripture under the influence of the Spirit of God. It is New Testament prophesying. The New Testament prophet does not give out new communications from God, but takes his text from God's past revelations, and this he

unfolds, expounds, and applies, not out of his own mind and heart alone, but with the help of God's Holy Spirit.

In this secondary sense, we are New Testament prophets. We have a great reservoir from which to draw—the contents of the Bible, God's past revelations to men. We are not to ignore the past. We are to interpret and enforce the truth which God has already revealed. Entire originality in the preacher is irreverence toward the word of God. We must of course read other books in order to understand the Bible. History, literature, science, philosophy, will throw their lights upon it. But the sum and substance of all preaching is the truth contained in the Bible. And only the Holy Spirit can enable us to understand and to declare that truth in such a way that it shall be the power of God unto salvation.

64. FORGETTING THINGS BEHIND

I HAVE been burning up old letters of late. It is astonishing how they accumulate. I do not wish to dump them down upon my posterity. Yet to destroy love-letters causes me a pang. I feel anew that the world passeth away, and that the places that know us now will soon know us no more forever.

What did Paul mean when he spoke about "forgetting the things that are behind"? He surely does not mean that we are to forget our friends and their kindnesses; he does not mean that we are to forget the past mercies of God. We are to remember these, and to summon up all our powers of mind and heart, "lest we forget." In Dante's "Divine Comedy," redeemed souls drink of the waters of Lethe to rid them of the memory of the past; but they then also drink of the waters of Eunoe to bring back the memory of the good. Only the evil is to be permanently forgotten.

There is a certain amount of evil even in the memory of our successes. Vanity tends to self-congratulation rather than to the rendering of thanks to God. Let us not wait for applause, even after our best efforts. Paul had won great victories for the truth, and he might easily have stopped to pride himself upon them, for he had emancipated the gospel from Jewish restrictions, and had opened the door of hope to the whole Gentile world. How much he had to remember! But he forgets the things that are behind, and presses

toward the goal—God's ultimate triumph in Christ Jesus. When the young lieutenant self-complacently brought to his general the news that his men had taken a standard, he was surprised and discomfited by the gruff reply, "Go, and take another." We must forget the things that are behind, or we shall never stretch forward to the things that are before.

Sometimes we need most to forget our failures. I well remember in my early ministry lying awake on Sunday nights, and thinking what a fool I had made of myself in my sermons that day. Even here Paul teaches us a good lesson. When he is stoned at Lystra, he pushes on to Derbe; when he is rejected by the philosophers at Athens, he pushes on to Corinth; when he is arraigned at Cæsarea, he pushes on to Rome. Yes, even our sins are to be forgotten, since God has cast them into the depths of the sea and remembers them no more against us.

It is well that we can forget. The man who was glad that he had eyes, that he might see every fault, was not so happy as the other man, who was glad that he had eyelids, so that he might not always see. We are bidden to lay aside every weight, and one of our heaviest weights is the weight of past transgressions. Let us turn over a new leaf, and begin with God's help a new record. God's forgiveness makes it possible for us to forgive ourselves, and God's restoration of us to his favor enables us to rejoice even while we bear some of the natural consequences of our sins. All sorrow shall at last be turned into joy, and

> When we reach the shore at last,
> Who will count the billows past?

65. REFORM, OR REGENERATION?

CHRISTIANITY aims at both reform and regeneration, but it puts cause before effect, regeneration before reform. "Make the tree good, and its fruit good," says Christ. Much of our modern socialistic propaganda, however, ignores this logical relation, and thinks to purify the stream without touching the fountain. And some of our new theology deals with the applications of Christianity, but forgets that we first need some Christianity to apply. Old Testament prophecy should teach us that reform is impracticable or evanescent in the absence of a sufficient motive and power. New Testament prophecy accomplishes its purpose, because it has the Cross of Christ for a motive and the Holy Spirit for a power.

The one obstacle to reform is what Kant calls "the radical evil of human nature." Human nature is not a green apple, that needs only sunshine and rain to ripen; it is an apple with a worm at the core, which only the knife can remove. Mere change in its circumstances will not alter its essential character. And society is made up of individuals. You can regenerate society only by regenerating its separate members. No happy society can be composed of selfish and hateful men. Christianity goes to the root of the matter; it reforms society by regenerating the individual. Nicodemus must learn that no mere externals will suffice; he hears Christ's solemn words: "Ye must be born again."

Horace Mann used to say that "one former is worth a hundred reformers." Let us who are preachers take that comfort to ourselves. We are set to purify the springs of human action, and that is a grander thing than to direct the course of the stream after it has once begun to flow. Reform will come in due time, if regeneration has only gone before. It is our business to help on all true reform; but, as ministers of Christ, we can do this best by giving to the community truly regenerated men. It takes a long time to light a coal fire if you begin by putting all your kindlings at the top. We do not build a house by beginning at the roof and then working downward. Human nature is like a run-down clock; you can make it tick for a little by touching the pendulum; but what it needs to make it go for any length of time is to be wound up. Only Christ for us on the Cross furnishes the motive, and only Christ in us by his Spirit furnishes the power, to overcome our selfishness and to insure permanent individual purity or permanent social service. We who are preachers are called to lay the foundations. Those foundations may be out of sight, and worldly men may not value our work. But we shall be living stones, because joined to Christ, the great Corner-stone, and upon us, as upon Peter of old, he will build his church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

66. FEAR NOT, THOU WORM!

Prof. George P. Fisher, of Yale, did not like to call himself a "worm of the dust." I once had a student who objected to that same designation. I explained to him that it had Scripture warrant. A prophet, in exile and in the slime of his dungeon, could well use oriental hyperbole, and could say, "I am a worm, and no man."

All depends on our sense of weakness and sin. If we feel ourselves in health and equal to any emergency, we have no disposition to speak ill of our condition. But when we are at the last gasp, it is a luxury to tell others that we are sick. Pride conceals its defects; humility is willing to confess them. On the tombstone of William Carey, the heroic missionary to India, are inscribed, at his own request, the words: "William Carey, Born August 17, 1761; Died June 9, 1834. A wretched, poor, and helpless worm, On thy kind arms I fall."

Such confession is the indispensable condition and prerequisite of divine help. It is only when we realize our emptiness, that God can fill us; only when we realize our impotence, that he can endow us with his power. "Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and

the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea, and the things that are not, that he might bring to naught the things that are; that no flesh should glory before God."

Let us consider "the end of the Lord," how God treats those who feel their own nothingness, and depend entirely on him. "Fear not, thou worm Jacob!" he says; "I will help thee; . . thou shalt thresh the mountains." The mighty powers that threaten the kingdom of God shall give way before what John Milton calls "the unresistible might of weakness." That very student who objected to be called "a worm," learned, after he left the seminary, to glory in his infirmity; and, when he was ready to be used, God made him "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds." "When I am weak," says the apostle, "then am I strong."

67. GOD'S REMEMBRANCERS

The monarchs of the East were indolent and forgetful creatures. They had no modern system of mnemonics. On a night when he cannot sleep, King Ahasuerus calls for the book of records. They remind him of Mordecai's services. But it is his servants who inform him of Mordecai's failure to receive reward. In some cases at least there was an officer of the court, whose special business it was to remind the king of promises to be kept or of duties to be done. This officer was called a remembrancer. The prophet Isaiah uses this custom to enforce the privilege and the obligation of prayer. "Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers," he says, "take ye no rest, and give him no rest, till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

This is strong anthropomorphism. It pictures the great Jehovah under the likeness of fallible men. But the Scriptures correct any wrong impressions by also declaring God's perfect and constant knowledge. The lonely Hagar in the wilderness can say, "Thou, God, seest me," or, "Thou art a God of seeing." That very book of Deuteronomy, which some think so devoid of New Testament comfort, tells us that "the eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." And one of the most beautiful declarations of the book of Revelation is that "the

four living creatures and the four-and-twenty elders fall down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." Not one of our prayers is forgotten. They are kept sacredly by God, and they rise before his throne like fragrant incense, until the time appointed for their answer.

What then is meant by this command that we serve as Jehovah's remembrancers? Certainly, not that God has forgotten, but rather that he wishes to engage us with himself in the furtherance of his plans. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: For this will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." God wants us to be his coworkers. Not angels, nor even God alone, is to save. Salvation for man is to be through man. We ourselves are to join with him in remembering the needs of men, and in fulfilling his purposes of salvation. In prayer we become the Lord's remembrancers, and fit instruments for the use of his Spirit.

68. STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES

The Treasurer of the United States has resigned his office, and the funds entrusted to him are being counted. He is responsible for the safe-keeping of hundreds of millions, and it will be necessary for him to show that there has been no loss of even a single dollar. He is a steward, and "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."

We who preach are in Scripture called "stewards of the mysteries of God," and each one of us is exhorted to acquit himself as "a good steward of the manifold grace of God." It is not money or property with which we are put in trust, but rather with the truth of the gospel and the interests of men's souls. For these we are responsible, not to our fellows, but to our Master, and to him at the last we must give account.

The "mysteries of God" are not hid from all; they are hid only from the uninitiated. The Christian minister has learned them and rejoices in them. The truth of the gospel is given to him that he may communicate it to others. But he must give it out without curtailment or adulteration. The apothecary is a steward of the physician. Many a good physician's prescription has brought death to the patient because the apothecary wrongly made it up. The apothecary is justly held to answer. We are apothecaries, and we may so change the prescriptions of the Great Physician as to destroy men instead of saving them.

As stewards of the mysteries of God, we need to know the truth ourselves. We cannot give to others what we do not ourselves possess. We do not need to evolve it from our own consciousness. We have our materia medica in the Bible. There are many theological quacks. If they speak not according to this word, it is because they have no truth in them. We have an objective revelation to preach, an atoning Christ to proclaim, an indwelling Spirit to interpret; and if we stand behind the Bible, we shall be found faithful.

To be a faithful steward requires courage, for our message humbles pride, demands submission, arouses opposition. It is very easy to trim our sails to the passing breeze of worldliness and unbelief. Let us remember that it is not man's judgment, but God's, which we have to meet. As John Bunyan warns us, let us " make our last day our company-keeper." Then we shall save not only ourselves, but also those who hear us, and having " kept the faith," we shall inherit " the crown of life " which God has prepared for those who love him.

69. JESUS CHRIST, AND CHRIST JESUS

In the New Testament there is a manifest evolution both of polity and of doctrine. The circumstances of the church providentially led step by step to a completed outline of organization; and the experiences of the apostles led step by step to a completed outline of "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." The youthful John, for example, is in the book of Revelation a veritable "son of thunder"; but in the fourth Gospel the aged John has become the apostle of love. Peter at the beginning has little knowledge of Jesus; but after a time he declares, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Paul's eschatology is greatly developed between the writing of the First and the writing of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians; and no one can mistake the still greater depth and insight of the later Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. The later utterances do not contradict the earlier; they only unfold, explain, and apply them.

This progress of doctrine may in some cases have been unconscious to the apostle himself. Many of the lessons of the apostolic writings are beneath the surface, and so are the best proofs of their genuineness. I find Paul, in his introduction to the Epistle to the Romans, calling himself "a servant of Jesus Christ"; while in his introduction to the Epistles to Timothy he calls himself "an apostle of Christ Jesus." The

higher nature of our Lord looms up more and more before Paul, as Paul is more and more able to apprehend it. In his early experiences he thought most of the historical manifestation, and the name of "Jesus" came first. In his later experiences the cosmical and divine relations of our Lord had principal significance, and the official title "Christ" came first. Whenever the name "Jesus Christ" occurs in the pastoral epistles, there is some reference to Christ's humanity. But the prevailing designation in these later writings is "Christ Jesus"; and this witnesses to a growing conviction on the part of the apostle that the humanity of Christ was but the temporal manifestation of his eternal power and godhead.

Let us learn from all this to recognize real discipleship in the early forms of faith. Peter, James, and John were followers of Christ, even when they first met him on the banks of the Jordan. They did not remain in that kindergarten stage of religious knowledge, for Pentecost taught them of Christ's deity and atonement. They were disciples before, notwithstanding the imperfection of their faith. But let us not content ourselves with "the first principles of Christ"; let us rather "press on unto perfection." Let us say with Paul: "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more." For he is not only "Son of man," but also "Son of God," "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"; not only "Jesus Christ," our human Saviour, but also "Christ Jesus," our divine Lord.

70. HELPING THE WEAK

This is our Home Mission week, and I wish to tell you of a Home Mission worker. You will not be the less interested when I say that he was my father-in-law, Eleazar Savage. At least a dozen churches in Western New York, and some of them our strongest, owe their very existence to his labors. Not that he was a pioneer, for he did not start new enterprises. He conceived his mission to be the helping of the weak. On his graduation, in 1824, from the Literary and Theological Institution at Hamilton, he became the first pastor of our First Baptist Church in Rochester. The church had been organized with a membership of twelve—five of them men and seven of them women. They could support a pastor only so long as he was a single man, and the result was that when Mr. Savage married, he had to resign. But he had already saved this important church from extinction.

That was the beginning of a long course of similar labors. He devoted himself to the rescue of feeble churches that were ready to perish. Being himself a strict economist, he was never absolutely dependent upon his people. He never waited for a church to call him; he always called the church. His method was to seek out some church that for months had had no preaching, and perhaps was rent by quarrels, and to promise them that he would set them on their feet again if they would do what they could. Gathering

together the faithful few, he would encourage them to hope and pray, would reconcile enmities, bring back the neglectful, induce persistent rebels to ask for exclusion, or, in case they would not do this, secure their exclusion by the church in spite of opposition on their part. A great revival usually followed, large additions were made to the church, and a spirit of liberality and self-support was engendered. A new pastor would be chosen, on his recommendation. Then his work was done, and he would move on, only to repeat the process with some other church that was ready to die.

His pastorates lasted ordinarily one year, sometimes two, rarely three. But by those brief pastorates he resuscitated the churches in Rochester, Oswego, Albion, Medina, Knowlesville, Kendall, York, Livonia, Bath, besides serving as missionary pastor in Cleveland and at the Rapids. In these pastorates hundreds were brought to Christ. He wrote and printed an admirable little book on "Formative and Corrective Church Discipline," which embodied his views and illustrated them. He was a homely and piquant, but an incisive and scriptural preacher. Though not rich in this world's goods, he still left something, when he died, to his children and to benevolent institutions. But his best legacy was the memory of a noble life, and a new reminder that "we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

71. SPEAKING WITH TONGUES

I WELCOME every honest effort to reconcile science and religion. God can use natural means for the accomplishment of his purposes, and when the natural will suffice, it is not necessary to postulate a supernatural working. Many so-called miracles may have their natural explanation, as an intensification of natural processes. The parting of the Red Sea may have been caused by a blowing of the east wind, and the passage of the Jordan may have been made possible by a landslide that choked the river's course and temporarily dried up its bed. The angel of the Lord, who smote the host of Sennacherib, may have had at his command a simoom of the desert with which to overwhelm the Assyrians. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah may have been due to volcanic eruption, the effects of which are still seen in the asphalt of that region. And so with regard to many other startling events of the Scripture record. If we knew all the latent powers of nature, we might be able to explain many narratives that now seem wholly supernatural.

Our Doctor Osgood, however, pointed out that no naturalistic explanation would do away with the miracle at the Red Sea; for a wind strong enough to pile up the waters would have been strong enough to sweep the Israelites off their feet. In each case, the timing of the event and its coincidence with the word of the prophet is a miracle of supernatural knowledge,

if not of supernatural power. We must always remember that nature itself is but the vehicle and instrument of the divine will, and that to call an event natural is not by any means to exclude a special agency of God.

All this is germane to the discussion of the miracle of speaking with tongues. We ought not to deny that in ecstatic states men's mental powers are quickened, their memories are strangely active, subconscious resources are drawn upon, they utter thoughts and words of which they are incapable in calmer moods. Pentecost may have brought such elements into action. But it is not necessary to suppose that the author of the Acts misunderstood or misinterpreted the facts, or that he attributed to divine causality what was purely natural. Nor is it necessary to suppose that the tongues at Pentecost were altogether the same as those which Paul speaks of in his Epistle to the Corinthians. We do not need a harmony that does violence to the narrative. When Luke says that "they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance," he is evidently describing a supernatural manifestation; and we must recognize and maintain a divine element in Pentecost, even if it surpasses all the powers of nature.

Was "the sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind"; were "the tongues parting asunder, like as of fire," and sitting "upon each one of them"; above all, was the fact that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit"—were these things merely natural phenomena, which came to be understood as special divine manifestations? We cannot believe this to be true, or

to be the meaning of the author of the Acts of the Apostles. As one of the commentators observes: "To suppose that the apostles all spoke one and the same language, but that the hearers were enabled to understand these utterances, each in his own language, is not only to do violence to the narrative, but simply to substitute one miraculous incident for another." The founding of the Christian church may well have been signalized by a miracle symbolic of the new unity of mankind under the influence of the Spirit of God. Nature is plastic in God's hands, and we may still believe that the gift of tongues, while possibly pressing natural powers into service, was essentially a supernatural and divine manifestation.

72. THE JOY OF THE LORD

My predecessor, Dr. E. G. Robinson, used to say that "heaven must not be likened to a grasshopper on a shingle floating down stream." But is not heaven rest for the weary? Yes, rest—but not inactivity. The saints "rest from their labors," but "their works follow with them"; that is, they rest from care and toil and sorrow, but their activity goes on. Heaven is more than rest; it is the fulfilment of all our right desires. For those who have no satisfaction of their esthetic longings here, heaven is unhindered exercise of the love for beauty. The poor girl who loved music, but who could not gratify her taste on earth, was promised that she should have a piano in heaven. I have some sympathy with that promise. If she does not have the piano, she will have all the delight that the piano signifies:

> And every power find sweet employ,
> In that eternal world of joy.

For those who are lonely here, heaven will furnish pure and blessed companionship—the companionship of those we have loved and lost; but chiefly the companionship of Christ, our Saviour. I greatly value that last verse of Richard Baxter's hymn:

> My knowledge of that life is small;
> The eye of faith is dim;
> But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
> And I shall be with him.

To my mind, the best hint as to the nature of heaven is given us in the words of Jesus, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The slothful servant had excused himself by charging his master with reaping where he had not sown; that is, with giving his laborers no share in the product—a very common complaint of the modern workman. But this is not the treatment which the divine Master gives to his servants. We are "sharers with Christ," μέτοχοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Heb. 3: 14), sharers of his reward, as we have been sharers of his work. The "joy of the Lord" into which we enter is nothing less than partnership—participation in Christ's activity and in the fruits of that activity. Ask yourself the question: What is Christ's joy? The answer is: He found his meat and drink in giving to that susceptible Samaritan woman the truth of his salvation. He himself tells us the secret of his joy when he says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." His joy is in service; and it is this joy of service which most of all makes heaven, for there "His servants shall serve him."

We are being educated for this service here. The greatest joy of the Christian is in bringing others to Christ; and our ministry here is to be rewarded by larger and higher ministry hereafter. George Eliot said truly that "the reward of a duty done is the power to do another." This present world does not provide a final or a sufficient arena for the exercise of our faculties: there will be other worlds to conquer by and by. I love to think that the man who preaches here with lisping, stammering tongue will be rewarded there by power worthily to declare the praises of

him who has called him to his kingdom and glory. We shall enter into the joy of our Lord by being qualified for nobler service to God and his creatures. And so I come to my final definition of heaven: Heaven is service, in fellowship with Christ, and in full possession of his Spirit.

73. NOT SUBJECT, BUT OBJECT

What I mean is that the preacher should not simply discuss subjects, but should always have a definite object to accomplish by his sermon. You have heard of the man who aimed at nothing in particular, and who always hit it. In pulpit address, absorption in a subject makes the sermon abstract and metaphysical, or else merely pleasing and entertaining. We are advocates before a jury, and we must aim continually at the verdict. Preaching deals with matters of life and death. It needs to be practical. Here is the grain of truth in pragmatism. We are to remember the needs of men and persuade them to be reconciled to God.

A good end does not justify bad means, and a right object does not justify a wrong subject. But the subject should be chosen with reference to the object, and not the object with reference to the subject. The object should be in the mind of the preacher first, and it should be expressed in his appeal to the hearer last. Some duty should be urged as the result of the preaching. Without this, the sermon becomes a mere homily. I regret to say that preaching in Germany generally makes the great homiletical mistake of leaving out all demand for immediate decision on the part of the hearer. The appeal is to the intellect and the emotions, but not to the will. Intellect and emotion, however, are valueless, unless they rouse the will. Man *is*

chiefly will; and preaching that ignores the will not only fails to move the real man, but it actually hardens the heart.

The end which Christ has in view is the building up of his church. Our preaching accomplishes its mission only as it leads the hearers to individual and collective effort for the spread of the gospel. Not great audiences, but great decisions; not spectacular effects, but work done after the preacher has departed—these are the true tests of a faithful ministry. It was a pitiful result of Doctor Talmage's work in Brooklyn, that when he died not a vestige of his church remained. The apostle Paul was ever looking beyond the present to the future; he wished to find his reward in the persistence of the church's testimony, and in the redeemed souls whom he would present to Christ at the last great day.

Let us judge our sermons by this rule. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Unevangelical preaching quickly shows its quality. Some pastors turn a desert into a garden; but other pastors turn a garden into a desert. The church that ceases to be evangelistic will soon cease to be evangelical; and the church that ceases to be evangelical will soon cease to exist. The one object of preaching is to secure the surrender of the will, the obedience of faith, the inner triumph of the kingdom of God. This will bring in its train, though not as its immediate result, all social and political reforms. And addressing men's wills with this one object in view, will bring about the triumph of the kingdom of God not only internally in the individual, but also externally in the church and in the world.

74. PRAYER FOR CHRIST

"MEN shall pray *for* him continually," says the psalmist. Why not say, "Men shall pray *to* him continually"? Both are true. Christ is the ground, as well as the object, of all true prayer. How often we utter the words, "for Christ's sake," without thinking of their meaning! Yet no prayer is ever answered, unless it is either consciously or unconsciously uttered in Christ's name. We had once a seminary student who conceived that the proper way to teach the truth was to say his prayer backward. So he began with "Amen"; then uttered the words "for Christ's sake"; and, after a number of petitions, ended with "Our Father who art in heaven." The young man's classmates reminded him that Satan is reported to say his prayers backward. I did not myself approve the method of our student, though it brought into the forefront a truth which is too important to be forgotten.

Those words, "for Christ's sake," have wonderful significance. They were the means of the conversion of Dwight L. Moody. He had entered the meeting-house of Doctor Kirk in Boston, and had fallen asleep during the service. The slight stir in the congregation at the end of the final prayer, awakened him. He heard only the words, "For Christ's sake, Amen." But those words were an arrow of conviction to his soul. Do you ask how that could be? I answer: Because they implied that we are sinners,

have no claims upon God, and can ask nothing on our own account, but are wholly dependent on the atonement and the merits of Jesus Christ. Those words taught Moody that he was ill-deserving, and that only in Christ could he find mercy.

"For Christ's sake" means not only that we have no hope but in him; it means also that in him "all things are ours." Since it is not our own worthiness, or even our own needs, that we have to plead, but rather his worthiness and abundance, nothing is too great for us to ask. The conversion of the whole world is only Christ's due. The Father loves the Son, and he has given him the kingdom. Let not our ill-desert prevent our praying, for our praying glorifies Christ, not us. Let us have faith in prayer, because Christ deserves all. Let us put new meaning into the words "for Christ's sake," and let us sing with new satisfaction that verse of the old hymn:

> For him shall endless prayer be made
> And endless praises crown his head.

75. LIMITING GOD

One of our greatest sins is that of "limiting the Holy One of Israel." We acknowledge his spirituality, his infinity, his perfection; yet this acknowledgment is mostly theoretical, while in practice we either ignore or deny those very attributes which are essential to his godhead. We limit God by making him material instead of immaterial, bounded instead of unbounded, imperfect instead of perfect. We are especially wrong when we put him under the limitations of space and time, instead of remembering that he is the Creator of space and time, and so is not subject to their law.

Take for example the matter of space. Space is a form of our thinking, common to all finite beings, and necessary to their present existence. But mind transcends space. You cannot cut your mind in two with a hatchet, nor speak of the southwest corner of your mind. Mind has no place, as brain has; minds have communication with each other, beyond all power of speech or gesture to explain. There is no absolute space, and even our minds are not entirely subject to the law of space. And God is mind, and perfect mind. He is not in space, but space is in him. He is everywhere. When we pray for a friend in Peking, God is there as well as here, and he can answer even while we pray. As by calling up Central we may reach a friend across the town, so by calling up God we may reach a friend in Peking. Wireless telegraphy

abolishes space, and believing prayer abolishes it also. In both cases, the ever-present God is the all-sufficient Intermediary.

God is not limited by time, any more than he is limited by space. Time is a form of our thinking, common to all finite beings, and necessary to their present existence. But mind transcends time. Whenever we grasp any whole, like a melody, there is a timeless act, quite different from our recognition of its separate notes. We realize how arbitrary and conventional are our divisions of time when we remember that we got the news of King Edward's death in England five hours before the actual time. There is no absolute time. God is not in time, but time is in God. Even our minds are not entirely subject to its law. And God is mind, and perfect mind. He is not under the law of time; his existence is not one of successions; he inhabits eternity. We must not limit the Holy One of Israel by imagining that he is involved in our bondage. "One day is with him as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." To us, prayer seems to meet with delays. It is because we are under the law of time. But God is not under that law; and we may rise into his eternal point of view. Wireless telegraphy abolishes time, and believing prayer abolishes it also. When we ask in faith, "we *have* the petitions" we desired of God. He that believeth "*hath* eternal life." The spiritual resurrection has taken place already: "the hour cometh, and now *is*." Faith catches a glimpse of God's eternal vision, and so is "assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen."

When we cease to limit the Holy One of Israel, we have a present God and Saviour. The only real God is an unlimited God—able to do for us abundantly, above all that we can ask or think. An omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent God—what more can we ask for our portion, in time or in eternity? The true believer is blest, both here and hereafter:

He feeds in pastures large and fair
  Of love and truth divine;
O child of God, O glory's heir,
  How rich a lot is thine!

A hand almighty to defend,
  An ear for every call,
An honored life, a peaceful end,
  And heaven to crown it all.

76. THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD

I WAS once mystified by the phrase, "the beauty of the Lord." But a little use of my concordance showed me that "the beauty of the Lord" is "the beauty of holiness." This is what the psalmist desires to behold in God's temple here; this is what Isaiah longs for when he speaks of seeing "the King in his beauty" hereafter. But we do not so readily apprehend the truth that the beauty of the Lord is the beauty of holiness. We think more easily of God's natural attributes, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence. His manifestations in the outward world challenge our admiration. Sunset clouds and starry skies are beautiful; and mountain peaks white with snow call forth poetical praises from even ungodly men. Doctor Barrows said truly that the Himalayas are only raised letters by which God teaches his blind children to read of his eternal power and godhead. But moral attributes are more worthy of worship than are the merely natural. The natural, indeed, are given to lead us to the moral. From nature we ought to rise to nature's God.

Yes, you say; but what attribute in God is supreme? What one of all the rest constitutes God's beauty? I know that here theologians differ. But I believe Scripture is on the side of those who maintain that holiness is the attribute which constitutes the basis of all the rest. "Righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne." If you say that love is also funda-

mental, I reply that love is optional, as holiness is not; that love requires a reason for its exercise, as holiness does not; that love is always conditioned and bounded by the right, while the right abides in unconditioned sway forever. You can always ask whether and how far it is right to love; but you can never ask whether or how far you may love the right. There are conditions and limitations to love; there are no conditions or limitations to righteousness. And so the beauty of the Lord, and that which distinguishes him from all his creatures, is the beauty of holiness.

In truth, there is no real beauty, even in nature, or literature, or art, which is not a faint reflection of the beauty of holiness in God. Holiness is the ultimate standard, by which all else must be judged. Beauty, like truth and goodness, is conformity to an eternal standard in the nature of God. The beautiful, like the true and the good, is more than the agreeable or the useful. Proportion, order, harmony, unity in diversity—all these are characteristics of beauty. But they all imply an intellectual and spiritual being, from whom they proceed, and by whom they can be measured. Both physical and moral beauty, in finite things and beings, are symbols and manifestations of him who is the author and lover of beauty, and who is himself the infinite and absolute Beauty to be loved. As our moral intuitions reveal God as the ground of our conviction of duty, so our esthetic intuitions reveal God as the ground of our conviction of beauty.

It is only a law of nature which God publishes when he says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy"; for "without holiness no man can see the Lord." To "worship God

in the beauty of holiness" is to come to him not in festal garments, but in a way congruous with his nature; that is, "with pure hands and a clean heart." What a test this is of our spiritual state! Is "the beauty of the Lord" to us "the beauty of holiness"? Is likeness to God the chief object of our ambition? Jesus has made the duty plain, and the attainment possible. He himself is "the Lord, our righteousness"; and he has said: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Shall we not pray with new earnestness the prayer of the psalmist, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us"?

77. HE CAME TO HIMSELF

THE prodigal son had been "out of his head"—*mente alienatus*. We call physicians of the insane "alienists." All sin is a sort of moral insanity, a sundering of the powers, a getting away from our true selves and from the true center of our being. And so, when the prodigal began to realize his condition, to hate his sin, and to long for his father's house, Jesus says that "he came to himself."

Our true place, morally and spiritually, is in God. The father's house is the image of protection and safety, as well as of sustenance and rest. Coming back to ourselves is always a coming back to God also; for in him only do we "live and move and have our being." Conscience and will, reason and desire, are never in harmony or unity, until we get back to God. The true self longs for God, and is not complete without God. The sin which separates us from God separates us from ourselves also. It is the loss of our manhood, and it reduces us to the level of the beasts that perish. Coming back to the reconciling and forgiving God restores our nature, brings peace to our souls, gives us our true selves once more.

No parable can teach all truth at a single stroke. There are two great features of God's salvation which are implied, but not expressed, in this parable of the Prodigal Son. One is that of the propitiatory work of Christ, which makes it possible for the Father

to receive back his wandering child. The sorrow of the Father's heart and his sense of the wrong done by the son are not touched upon. Christ's Cross expresses both God's righteousness and God's suffering. Nor does the parable express the Father's seeking of the son, and the influences used to bring him back. The work of the Holy Spirit, as well as the work of Christ, is taught in other parts of Scripture. But it is always through the Holy Spirit that we are brought back to God. It is he who convinces us of sin, and reminds us of the Father's house. And only the Holy Spirit can reproduce in us the self-consciousness of which, in the nature of God, he is the perfect model and example.

I love to think that, as there is a natural relation to all men which Christ, as their life, sustains before they become his followers, so there is a natural relation to all men which the Holy Spirit, as the universal principle of consciousness, sustains before they yield to his persuasions. Only in the Holy Spirit does consciousness bear witness that we are our true selves. Paul says: "I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit." Have we possession of our true selves?

> Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
> With all thy quickening powers;

help each one of us to see what God designs him to be; and, in the light of that revelation, may each one of us "come to himself"!

78. HYMNS PRESERVE DOCTRINE

THANK God for hymns! What John Milton says of books is even more true of hymns: a good hymn is "the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up, on purpose to a life beyond life." Who was it that said: "Give me the making of a people's songs, and I care not who makes their laws"? That too is true of the power of the hymn. It comes out of the heart, rather than out of the head; it abides in the memory when the creed is forgotten; it subconsciously influences the will, and stimulates the man to action. Germany owes much to her hymn-writers. Her preachers have often gone astray, and have given the people from the pulpit a stone instead of bread; but the old evangelical hymns which the hearers have learned in their childhood, and which they sing in their age, have kept alive the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Hymns are good not only for public worship, but for private comfort and edification. Our Lord met the tempter with passages of Scripture; we may put next to Scripture the hymnology of the church. When you are tempted, say over a hymn; it will divert your mind; it will help you to resist the adversary. Have a stock of hymns on hand at all times, side by side with memorized Scripture, so that you have a fund from which to draw. And when you visit the sick and the dying, the hymn that you may repeat in

the ear of the sick or the dying man will do more than any words of your own to lift the burden from his heart.

Some day we shall all come to die. When earthly things are vanishing, and we are shut out from books and cannot even hear the words that are spoken to us, it will be an unspeakable comfort to repeat to ourselves some one of those hymns of the ages in which true believers have expressed their confidence in God. "Jesus, lover of my soul"; "Thou, O Christ, art all I want"; "Rock of ages, cleft for me"; "Just as I am —thy love unknown Has broken every barrier down; Now to be thine, yea, thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come!"—these are the things we need to cheer us in the solemn hour when we stand on the verge of Jordan and the river of death lies just before us.

Ritschl was a great theologian, but he swung off, in my judgment, from evangelical truth. The sense of sin in him was weak, and his faith in the atoning death of Christ was weak correspondingly. He even scoffed at Paul Gerhardt's hymn: "*O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*"—"O sacred Head, now wounded"—as an antiquated and degrading expression of Christian emotion. But in his later years he changed his mind. Age and feebleness made him feel his dependence as he had not felt it in his youth. And this stalwart theologian instructed his nephew to repeat to him, whenever he should come to die, that same hymn which he had in his early days so despised. What better words indeed could one desire to have uttered in his ears, in the hour and article of death, than those words of Paul Gerhardt's hymn:

Be near me when I'm dying;
  Show thou thy Cross to me;
And for my comfort flying,
  Come, Lord, and set me free.
These eyes, new faith receiving,
  From Jesus shall not move;
For he who dies believing
  Dies safely, through thy love.

79. LIFE BLOSSOMS RED

It is well to know the history of hymns. Some of them have come out of great tribulation, and they witness to great triumphs of faith. I know of no more pathetic instance than George Matheson's hymn, "O Love, that will not let me go." George Matheson was a brilliant young student for the ministry in the University of Edinburgh. But his eyes began to fail him. He consulted a specialist, and was informed that his trouble was incurable, and that he must soon entirely lose his sight. He was engaged to be married, and his first thought was for his intended bride. From the office of the physician he went directly to her house, and left it to her to say what their future relations should be. She was unspeakably sorry, she said, but she could not marry a blind man; and with that double loss of sight and of his bride, he went to his room, and wrote the hymn, "O Love, that will not let me go."

Doctor Matheson's biography makes no mention of this incident, although an intimate friend of his tells me that the story relates only veritable fact. The lady who rejected this rising preacher and poet in his youth may still live, and this may account for the omission. The incident throws light upon the last line, as well as upon the first line, of the hymn. That closing line has been a puzzle to many who have sung the hymn, as well as to thousands who have read it. It

certainly has not the clearness of meaning which marks the best of our hymns. It reads:

> And from the ground there blossoms red
> Life that shall endless be.

How can it be said that life blossoms at all, and especially, that it "blossoms red"? I venture an explanation. The poet has been speaking of the Cross that lifts us up, as it lifted up our Lord. He dare not ask to fly from it. He lays life's glory in the dust; he looks on all his earthly hopes and expectations as departed; yes, dead. But this glory of the earthly life is buried seed-corn, that dies, only to rise again. Even here on earth we see the blossom; in heaven we shall see the perfect fruit.

It is the "red blossom of sacrifice"; so Matheson himself tells us in his "Leaves for Quiet Hours." And the blossom is red, because the sacrifice is of very heart's blood, like the sacrifice of our Lord on our behalf. The hymn therefore expresses the deepest secret of the Christian life—union with Christ, in his sacrificial death and in his endless life. For, "if we die, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him"—a cryptic saying, but to the initiated the very wisdom of God. I trust we can all sing with George Matheson:

> O Cross, that liftest up my head,
> I dare not ask to fly from thee;
> I lay in dust life's glory dead,
> And from the ground there blossoms red
> Life that shall endless be.

80. POWER WITH GOD

Jacob was a schemer. He had supplanted his brother, outwitted his father-in-law, made himself rich. He had still to meet Esau, but he thought by presents and by strategy to escape his anger. A guilty conscience however suggested a greater danger than that of conflict with his brother. There was an account with God, which he must settle before he could enter the promised land. So he wrestled all night long on the other side of the brook Jabbok, with One who, though in human form, was none other than the Almighty. That wrestling was the picture and expression of Jacob's whole life—the pushing, self-confident, indomitable determination to have his own way, and at any cost to win.

If the struggle had not changed its character, Jacob would never have become Israel. God mercifully took away Jacob's strength, so that physical wrestling was no longer possible to him. At last he realized his own weakness; and, when God was just about to leave him, he betook himself to prayer: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." When he saw that all his strength and subtlety were vain, and that he could do nothing of himself, physical wrestling gave place to spiritual wrestling; self-dependence gave place to faith; trust in human wisdom gave place to trust in God. Jacob had power with God, when he let God have power with him. Only when he acknowledged his own

weakness did he become strong. Only when he submitted all his plans, all his life, all his future to the divine control could it be said to him: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for thou hast had power with God and with man, and hast prevailed."

It is a great lesson for us. We begin by thinking that we can outwit and conquer God. Our prayers are often attempts to impose our plans upon him. We try to overcome him by loud speaking and importunity. It takes a long time for us to learn that the essence of true prayer is the merging of our wills in God's will. "Not as I will, but as thou wilt," said Jesus in Gethsemane. But when we surrender all, then we gain all. Like Jacob, we have power with God, when God has power with us; and having power with God, we have power with men also.

81. LET US MAKE MAN

The thoughts of God are long, long thoughts. His processes are generally those of evolution. The simple comes before the complex; the great is preceded by the small. No man is a six-footer when he is born; in the new birth the regenerated man is still an infant, and sanctification is needed for his development. When at the beginning God said, "Let us make man," he looked beyond man's beginnings, through his fall, his struggles, his redemption. Creation was but the first step; new-creation was to follow. The Eighth Psalm tells us of the design, "Thou hast put all things under his feet." The second chapter of Hebrews shows us the fulfilment in Christ, who is "crowned with glory and honor," and who will, as Paul in the Philippians declares, "fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory."

When we look at the bedraggled garments and the careworn faces of so many whom we pass in the streets, and know that this outward half expresses while it half conceals an inward poverty and shame, we "see not yet all things subjected" to man. Creation is not yet complete. Yet God said, "Let us make man," and he will not leave his work half done. He who gave us Christ will, "with him, freely give us all things." It is Christ himself who says, "Greater things than these shall ye see." Christ is the life of

humanity; only in him do we see God's purpose fully realized; he will not stay his hand "till we all attain . . . unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Jesus attained his perfected manhood only through the suffering of the Cross. In us too, before outward conditions can be fully rectified, sin must be conquered and cast out. We are to enter into God's plan, and to help in his making of man, first, by our own discipline and improvement. Self-realization can be reached only through self-surrender. True manhood means complete receptivity toward God. But it means, secondly, complete outgoing toward men. We are to make men, by the proclamation of the gospel, by the fellowship of the church, by all manner of social service, and by the infusion into literature, education, and government of the spirit of Christ.

God's making of man will not be complete until all humanity is gathered to himself, and the prodigal race has returned to the Father's house. It will be worth the long discipline of individual life and of collective history, when all men are filled with God's Spirit of love, and are living the life of Christ. Nothing more will be needed to make a new heaven and a new earth, in which man shall have dominion over the works of God's hands, and all things shall be put under his feet. In that great day we shall understand how much was meant when God said, "Let us make man."

82. MAN BETTER THAN A SHEEP

Our Lord ended one of his parables with the words, "How much then is a man better than a sheep!" Certain modern philosophers, however, seem bent on proving that man's so-called advantage over the animal creation is an illusion. They acknowledge the existence of consciousness in man, for this he has in common with the brutes; but self-consciousness, which the brutes have not, they deny; and in denying self-consciousness, they deny personality and responsibility, and make man no better than a sheep.

The central doctrine of a true philosophy is the doctrine of the self. If man is only the result of impulses from without, if heredity and environment completely explain him, if there is no causal agent over and above what is caused, we must cease to talk of freedom or of immortality. The very God man worships must be conceived of after man's own likeness, devoid of moral character, with no eye to pity and with no arm to save.

Why should men take such delight in arguing that, because they came through the ape, they are no better than the ape? The only answer is, that they make themselves what they would like to be, namely, irresponsible beings, waifs on the stream of existence, without power to resist evil or to do good. To escape from duty and from God, what sacrifice of their manhood they will make, what blinding of their higher faculties they will endure!

I do not mean that all who advocate a deterministic theory of the will, or deny the existence of a self distinguishable from our sensations and feelings, are conscious of their dislike for duty and for God. I do mean that pride and self-will and wrong desires have so blinded them, that they gravitate toward the views which will quiet an accusing conscience and constitute an excuse for the withholding of their wills from God.

The preacher has two ways of reaching such men. He has first to declare God's law. That presupposes man's freedom and awakens man's conscience. But the preacher has, secondly, to declare God's love, and his provision of salvation in Christ. God would never have published his law, and he would never have given his Son to die, if man had been no better than a sheep.

"Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, is as the beasts that perish." Man can make himself a brute, both here and hereafter. But he can also "win his soul" (Luke 21 : 19); and to those who "seek for glory and honor and immortality," God has promised eternal life.

83. HYMN-BOOK OMISSIONS

The hymns of olden times were longer than those of to-day. Some medieval hymns had twenty verses. I once attended a Methodist Conference, where a hymn of Charles Wesley's was sung. The singing grew in volume of sound and in depth of feeling to the very end, and the end came only with the fifteenth verse. We are probably wise in breaking up those long hymns, or in omitting many of their stanzas. Our modern service is made more interesting and more effective by shortening the hymns while we increase their number.

But we need to be thoughtful and discreet in our omissions. Every good hymn is a unity, and it has a climax. Let us not sing the introduction, and then leave out the conclusion. Praise to the Trinity should not be addressed to the Father and to the Son, and then ignore the Holy Spirit. Let us ask ourselves what is the main thought of the hymn, and let us sing the verses which express that thought, even if we have to begin with the third or fourth stanza. The final stanza is usually the summing up of the whole, and for that reason ought almost never to be omitted.

Our hymn-books must be judged by this rule. They reflect the doctrinal sense of the churches, and when that doctrinal sense is weak, the collection as a whole is weak also. I find less conviction of sin and less crying for mercy in the modern hymn-book than was

common in the hymn-book of my childhood. And yet, I am bound to say, that the consciousness of a present Christ, and of rest in his love, is more fully expressed than of old. The lack is seen in the omission of hymns that relate to the atonement, such as:

> Arise, my soul, arise;
> Shake off thy guilty fears;
> The bleeding sacrifice
> On thy behalf appears;

in the omission of verses, like:

> His dying crimson, like a robe,
> Covers his body on the tree;
> Then I am dead to all the globe,
> And all the globe is dead to me;

or in the omission of that closing stanza of Henry Lyte's great hymn, "Abide with me":

> Hold thou thy Cross before my closing eyes;
> Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
> Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee—
> In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

The omission of the verses to which the preceding stanzas are only an introduction seems to indicate either literary or spiritual blindness in the compiler. I fear that, in some cases at least, it indicates deliberate purpose to exclude all clear expressions of evangelical faith. For this reason, let us be careful in our selection of our hymn-books; for they will remain to shape the beliefs of our churches long after we are dead.

84. PREPARATION FOR MISSIONARY WORK

I AM often asked whether a young man who intends to go as a foreign missionary ought to supplement his seminary course by postgraduate studies. In general, I do not advise it. Unless he is called to give instruction abroad in some college or theological seminary, and to teach some specialty there, delay in entering upon his work may even lessen his chances of success. Delay sometimes means shrinking from difficulty and hardship; and in such cases, the longer the delay, the less is the moral courage of the man. The study of comparative religion in some institutions is so conducted as to weaken evangelical faith, and there are men who have concluded that Christianity has no claim to be a special divine revelation.

After three years of academic, four years of collegiate, and three years of theological study, the average man can learn more from contact with the world, in a supplementary year, than he can learn from books. This is especially true, if he is to work in a foreign land and in a foreign tongue. One needs to be young and plastic to get control of the organs of speech, and to adapt one's self to the ways of a foreign people. Every hour of delay makes the acquisition of a language and the cultivation of new habits of thought more difficult.

I admire some of the methods of the China Inland Mission, and I wish that they could be adopted by our

own Mission Board. In Toronto there is a school of probation, through which applicants for foreign appointment must pass. There are three things in which each candidate must show aptitude: first, a practical evangelistic spirit, an actual habit of personal effort in the winning of souls, the aggressiveness of street preaching and of the Salvation Army. There is no use of taking to China a lamp that will not burn in America; and a merely theoretical and closet Christian will make a poor missionary in India.

Secondly, the candidate must have some linguistic aptitude. Some of our missionaries abroad cannot, even after twenty years of residence, speak the language of the people among whom they labor sufficiently well to escape the gibes of the ungodly. It is not mere scholarship that is needed. The Standard Oil Company has its drummers in China. They do not know literary Chinese, but sufficient colloquial Chinese to make them successful in trade. The China Inland Mission School determines whether the candidate has the ability to acquire a language orally, and, if not, he is debarred from foreign service.

And thirdly, this school, at whose head is an experienced and spiritual director, determines, after a year's residence in the family, whether the applicant can get on with his brethren; whether he has the humility and the social gifts which give him access to the hearts of others; or, in other words, whether he is personally affectionate and trustworthy. A postgraduate course of this sort would prevent many failures on the foreign field, and this is the only sort of postgraduate study that I would strongly recommend.

85. ALWAY REJOICING

God does not ask us to be irrational. He bids us rejoice. But he knows that rejoicing is not a matter of will. I cannot rejoice by simply willing to. "Cheer up!" may be a vain exhortation. Better crazy sorrow than crazy mirth. Tennyson says well, in his "Two Voices":

> And therefore rather made I choice
> To commune with that barren voice,
> Than him that said, "Rejoice! Rejoice!"

It is not irrational rejoicing to which Paul exhorts us. He implies that there is reason for rejoicing, and that by reflection we may find out what it is. The reason is, not in our trouble, or pain, or loss, or affliction, or death; for no suffering for the present is joyous, but grievous. We are not obliged to say that black is white, or that there is no such thing as matter, or pain, or sin. Senseless ignoring of evil, and even stoical despising of it, is no part of Christian philosophy.

The reason for rejoicing is our relation to Christ. In spite of sickness and sorrow, we may still "rejoice in the Lord"; that is, in union with Christ, in fellowship with his sufferings, in assurance that he feels and sorrows with us, and will stay by us through it all. The little boy who shrank from the surgical operation, consented when he learned that his father would hold his hand. The overshadowing presence of Christ

gives us companionship in suffering, and makes certain a happy issue out of all our afflictions.

The joy of the Lord is our strength. It is given to the believer at his conversion. Why do we lose it? Because we forget Christ. Let us pray, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." Then we shall be able to obey the injunction of the apostle, and to "rejoice in the Lord alway."

86. IN THY LIGHT

PUZZLING and forbidding texts are often most profitable when we study them. This is particularly true of some Old Testament texts: *In Vetere Testamento Novum latet; in Novo Testamento Vetus patet.* In the Psalms we have an anticipation of the profoundest teaching of the apostle John; and I want no better proof than this that "men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." "With thee," says the psalmist, "is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light." John only develops and explains this statement when he tells us that God alone has life in himself; that he has given to his Son to have life in himself; that this life of God in Christ is the light of men; in short, that God's light is Christ, and that only in Christ do we escape from intellectual and moral darkness.

"In thy light shall we see light"—how much that means, when we interpret it as referring to Christ! Christ enlightens the conscience, to see the meaning of God's law; Christ enlightens the heart, to see the meaning of God's grace. The order and constitution of the world, our own moral nature, our dignity as children of God, and our degradation as wanderers from our Father's house, God's revelations in the Bible, and God's representatives in the church—all these are darkness to us until we see them in the light of Christ.

Turner, the painter, exhibited a picture which

seemed all mist and cloud, until he put a dab of scarlet into it. That gave the true point of view, and all the rest became intelligible. So the blood of Christ, and his sacrifice for sin, make both the Scriptures and human history intelligible. Christ carries in his girdle the key to all mysteries. Without him no philosophy of history is possible; and Pascal said well: "Jesus Christ is the center of everything, and the object of everything, and he that does not know him knows nothing of nature and nothing of himself."

The Cross is the key to creation. The most illiterate Hottentot who knows Christ knows the meaning of the universe, better than does the unregenerate scientist or philosopher; for the Hottentot knows who made it, and why it was made; while the scientist and the philosopher stand petrified before the problems of its origin and its destiny. Only in Christ's light do we see light. Union with Christ therefore is the central doctrine of theology, as well as the best practical means of discovering our duty.

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," because he has not Christ to interpret them to him. The wisdom of this world is foolishness, because it ignores him who is the wisdom of God, and who alone can make us wise unto salvation. Thanks be to "God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." But the words of the psalm are words for the future, as well as for the past. "In thy light shall we see light." When the sun of life sinks to its setting, and our natural spirits fail to support us, then

"at evening time it shall be light." And in the other world, when we see Christ as he is, we shall know even as we are known, and all darkness will be forever past. Why limit the promise even to the past and the future? It is a promise for the present also. On our path "the true light already shineth." "I am the light of the world," says Christ; "he that followeth after me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." While we have the light, let us believe on the light, that we may become sons of light!

87. PRAISE THE MOUNT

Familiarity often makes our singing perfunctory; and, in giving out a hymn, we may well call attention to the thought which we intend a particular stanza to express. Some of our hymns, moreover, need explanation. The child who innocently asked the meaning of the phrase, "The consecrated cross-eyed bear," certainly needed to be enlightened. There is an expression in that well-known hymn, "Come, thou Fount of every blessing," which long troubled me, and which possibly has troubled you. It is:

> Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
> Mount of God's unchanging love.

What "Mount" is alluded to? In what sense am I "fixed upon it"? And how is my security related to "God's unchanging love"? The ideal hymn does not leave such questions to be asked. This is not an ideal hymn; but it is so often sung that it has claims upon us. Let us try to interpret it.

It seems to me that the writer of the hynm had in mind both Mount Moriah and Mount Calvary, of which latter mount, Moriah was the Old Testament type. When Abraham found that the Lord had himself provided a ram for sacrifice, and that no offering of his son was required, "he called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh," meaning, "In the Mount of Jehovah it shall be provided." In giving it that name, Abraham "praised the Mount of God's

unchanging love"; for God had proved faithful to his promise, and had spared Abraham's son. But Mount Calvary was a fuller revelation of that same faithfulness; for there, and for the first time, it appeared that God "spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all." There is the final proof of God's unchanging love; and we too should "praise the Mount," for there we see how completely God will provide.

The words, "I'm fixed upon it," are an allusion to the psalm: "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing, yea, I will sing praises." The psalmist says of the righteous: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in Jehovah." Faith rests upon the Mount of God's promise in the Old Testament, and the Mount of God's revelation in the New. Mount Moriah gives the prophecy; Mount Calvary gives the fulfilment. Let us "praise the Mount"; for in the "Mount of the Lord" are seen his wondrous faithfulness and his infinite love—both of them historically manifested, as the foundation of our faith for time and for eternity. God help us to say, "I'm fixed upon it, Mount of God's unchanging love"; for there is no other refuge for a sinning soul, but the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf.

Here I rest, forever viewing
  Mercy's streams, in streams of blood;
Precious drops, my soul bedewing,
  Plead and claim my peace with God.

Lord, in loving contemplation,
  Fix my heart and eyes on thee;
Till I taste thy full salvation,
  And thine unveiled glories see.

88. STRAIGHTWAY

The Gospel according to Mark is the Gospel for the Roman world, the pushing, conquering, domineering world, of which the emperor was the representative and embodiment. There is no single word that characterizes Mark's Gospel better than the word "straightway." There is a rapidity and restlessness in the narrative, which must have attracted any citizen of the Roman Empire. Jesus is described as the wonder-worker; and in all his movements there is alertness, energy, and decision. At the baptism, "straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder"; "straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness"; when he saw Simon and Andrew, "straightway he called them"; "on the sabbath day straightway he entered into the synagogue and taught"; and the word "straightway" occurs eleven times in the very first chapter.

All this suggests to us the readiness and activity of a normal personality. The sympathy of Jesus goes out at once; for there is no selfishness to hold it back. Moral perception is instantaneous, for there is no blindness of intellect to prevent immediate doing of duty. Power is there, all waiting to be used; for his will is one with the will of God. No time is left for temptation, or anxiety, or remorse; because he is filled with the Holy Spirit, and instantly obeys his monitions. This is true manhood, the image of God in man.

How much more we would enjoy, how much more accomplish, if we would make our motto "Straightway"! When a hard task is before us, let there be no procrastination, but let us set about it without delay. Delays are dangerous; for the sense of duty becomes dull, there is chance for diversion, Satan comes in to tempt. What bitter regrets we shall be spared, what forward steps in holiness we shall take, what increase in power shall be ours, if we follow the example of our Lord, have him as our indwelling source of energy, and so do with our might what our hands find to do!

If we ever preach a sermon on that word "straightway," let us not neglect to make an application to the unconverted. Mr. Finney, the evangelist, impressed upon me the added guilt and danger of the man who hears the truth, is convinced of his sin, and yet delays to surrender his soul to Christ. When the Saviour is passing by, blind Bartimeus does not delay; he cries for mercy; if he neglect his opportunity, he may go blind to his dying day. It is written that "he sprang up, and came to Jesus"; and it is also written that "straightway he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way." "Behold now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation."

89. WHY GOD HATES SIN

YEARS ago I stood on the deck of an ocean steamer, listening to the talk of the captain. A steward came suddenly forward and told the captain that a hostler, in charge of horses in the hold, had thrown a lighted match into the straw, and that the men near had found difficulty in putting out the blaze. The captain turned pale, rushed to the gangway, seized the offender by the collar, dragged him from the stall, and put him in irons for the rest of the voyage. And all for throwing away a lighted match? Yes, because that lighted match might have meant the loss of the ship a thousand miles from land, and the drowning of all her passengers and crew. The captain hated fire.

The fire that God hates is sin. The least sin is self-multiplying. Left to itself, it will set on fire the whole course of nature, and it is itself set on fire by hell. God has permitted sin to begin in so small a way, in order that its evil may be the more manifest. How small a thing seemed the first transgression—the eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree!

> 'Twas but a little drop of sin
> We saw this morning enter in;
> And lo, at eventide, the world is drowned!

A single flesh-fly, with its progeny in the tropics, will devour a sheep's carcass as quickly as will a lion. Sin is a principle in course of development. Do not judge it by what it is now, but by what it may become.

Its small beginnings hide an infinity of evil. We can stamp out tuberculosis only at the start; when it is developed, there is no cure, and no staying of its ravages. And sin is plausible and deceitful at the beginning; it even comes to us as an angel of light; but, "when it is full-grown, it bringeth forth death." And God, who sees the future in the present, cries to us, with most pathetic voice: "Oh, do not this abominable thing, that I hate!"

And yet the dreadful consequences of sin are not the main reason why God hates it. He hates it because it is the opposite of his nature. In itself, and apart from its consequences, it is condemnable. It is rebellion over against his sovereignty, darkness over against his light, impurity over against his purity, selfishness over against his love. Sin is his antagonist and would-be destroyer. Sin would dethrone God, and set up its own rule upon the ruins of his empire. Sin is the effort of the creature to take the place of the Creator; of the planet to make itself the center of the solar system; of finite man to "oppose and exalt himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God." All sin is the attempt, consciously or unconsciously, to secure what Satan promised in his first temptation, namely, "Ye shall be as God."

But God aims to show, not only the greatness of sin, but also the greatness of Christ. If sin abounds, grace abounds much more. As the ship captain starts to extinguish the blaze, so Christ leaves his throne, and endures the cross, that he may put down sin in this

revolted province of God's empire. Hell on the one hand, and the Cross on the other, reveal God's estimate of sin. It is a revelation to principalities and powers in heavenly places, as well as to mortal men. So he may preserve other worlds from falling, and the sad experience of our planet may work out the lasting good of the whole universe. This little sphere, though it is not the material center, may yet be the spiritual center, of God's whole system of worlds. Here is enacted the greatest drama of the ages. And the most important thing in history is the Cross,

> Where Christ, the mighty Maker, died
> For man, the creature's, sin.

Let us estimate our own sins by God's standard. Let us see in the least of them the beginnings of infinite evil. Let us fly to Christ, as our refuge from their guilt and power. Above all, let us heed God's warning, "Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate!"

90. HOW TO DEAL WITH ATHEISTS

ARE there atheists? Theoretically, yes; practically, no. In practice, all men show by their language, actions, and expectations that they have the idea of a Being above them, upon whom they are dependent, who is their standard of truth, beauty, and goodness, and who imposes law upon their moral natures. But in theory, men may ignore or even deny that they have any idea of such a Being, and may believe such an idea to be self-contradictory and irrational. The only way in which we can convince these unbelievers is by appealing to their underlying convictions, and by showing them that they practically admit what they theoretically deny.

With a professed atheist, we may begin by frankly acknowledging that we cannot, either mathematically or logically, demonstrate God's existence; since it is a primitive truth, like that of our own existence, and the existence of other persons like ourselves. Neither self nor not-self can be proved; yet we believe in both. In practice, we are compelled to affirm or deny; and in practice we universally affirm; and that, in spite of the fact that here and there is a man who declares that there is no such thing as a self, and that what we call the external world is all an illusion. If we believe in a self that cannot be proved, and in an external world that cannot be proved, we may also believe in a God who cannot be proved.

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Again, we may test faith by its practical consequences. Believing in God's existence fits in with our natural belief in our freedom, responsibility, duty, good or evil desert, as disbelief does not. Providence, prayer, hope for our own future and for the future of the world, are bound up with belief in God; if we give up God, we have no assurance of a happy issue of moral effort in this world, or of immortal life in the world to come. Atheism has proved itself in human history to be demoralizing. Theism is, in this way and to this extent, like science, susceptible of verification. Call God's existence a working hypothesis, if you will; it will show itself the better faith, by promoting a nobler life than that of the unbeliever.

Still further, these rational processes of ours presuppose a rational Ordainer and Upholder of the universe. Truth, beauty, goodness, imply a standard to which they conform. There must be a God to justify our confidence in our innate ideas, in our sense of beauty, in our conviction of moral obligation. The universe is a thought, an ordered whole, a moral system; there must be a Thinker, a Designer, a Lawgiver, as the Author, Upholder, Ruler, of our mental and moral life. This is not argument, but rather, explication. As Jacobi said of the beautiful: "It can be shown, but not proved." And Robert Browning has written well of God's existence:

> I know that he is there, as I am here,
> By the same proof, which seems no proof at all,
> It so exceeds familiar forms of proof.

But, after all, we shall find that no reasoning will suffice to convince the atheist, if he is unwilling to

admit the truth. The will to believe must be there. The secret of atheism is really a dislike for the character and the demands of God. Poe explained his atheism by saying that it was intolerable for him to conceive of any Being immeasurably superior to himself. Theism humbles man's pride, implies his dependence as a creature and as a sinner. He is willing to believe in self; why will he not believe in God? "Belief," as Emerson says, "consists in accepting the affirmations of the soul; unbelief, in rejecting them." But acceptance or rejection is determined by the will. Since neither theism nor atheism can be proved, we choose the alternative which we prefer. Do we wish a God to exist? Then we may believe in his existence, and our faith will justify itself by its results. We ask the atheist to trust the voice of his own nature, and to make experiment as to its truth. We claim that this is the method of science. Nature and her laws are assumed at the start, but verification comes with every successive step. Religion assumes God's existence at the beginning, but each following experience furnishes new evidence that the assumption was correct. We may rationally urge the atheist to "taste and see that Jehovah is good"; for we have found that "blessed is the man that taketh refuge in him."

91. WRITTEN ON HIS HANDS

In the hymn, "Arise, my soul, arise!" there is a couplet which needs interpretation. It reads:

> Before the throne my Surety stands;
> My name is written on his hands.

The author of that hymn was Charles Wesley. I am inclined to think he had in mind another couplet:

> My sins gave sharpness to the nails,
> And pointed every thorn.

Both these hymns derive all their impressiveness from their reference of Christ's sufferings to our sins. This is the representation of Scripture. Even in his heavenly glory, Christ appears to the apostle John as "the Lamb that hath been slain." The marks of the nails are still upon his hands, to witness that he died for us. We now see, more clearly than did Thomas on that second Sunday evening after the resurrection, that Christ is alive forevermore. But we also see, more clearly than did Thomas, that it is our sins that brought death to the Son of God.

These hymns express the Christian consciousness that the death of Christ was the act and the guilt, not alone of Jews and Romans, but of the whole world of sinners. Mankind is a solidarity, and the Cross was the effort of the human race to put Christ, that is, to put God, out of the world. And since I am a part of that sinning race for which Christ died, I am myself

responsible; it is I who nailed Christ to the cross; those nail-prints in his hands and feet are the marks my sins have made; I am guilty of the shed blood of God's only Son; the Holy Spirit identifies me with the murderers of Christ.

But, thank God, I can look farther. Since Jesus gave himself to death for me, and endured the cross that I might be freed from death, those nail-prints which my sins have caused are also the guarantee of my deliverance. The Lamb of God has taken my sin, only to take it away. He is my Surety; he answers for me; when Satan accuses and threatens, I can point to Christ's wounds, and say:

> Before the throne my Surety stands;
> My name is written on his hands.

92. FROM EACH, AND TO EACH

KANT defined an organism as a whole, in which each part is reciprocally means and end; each part exists for the whole, and the whole exists for each part. In accordance with this definition, the ideal social organism might have for its motto: "From each, according to ability; to each, according to need." How far we are from realizing such an ideal, Socialists are not slow to point out. How fully they can secure its realization by any of their proposed methods, is very doubtful.

The real obstacle is the selfishness of human nature. Business genius will not do for others what it will do for itself. Men like independence more than they like subordination. Yet the sinking of self, and the disposition to combine with others, are needed for complete social reform. Reform therefore must be preceded by regeneration; and the social ideal can be realized only by filling the individual members of society with love to God and their fellows.

"From each, according to ability; to each, according to need"—how beautiful the theory, but how miserable the practice! Instead of the spirit of service, we find an overgrown individualism; instead of the rich and the learned and the noble regarding their advantages as resources with which to bless others, we find them doling out their gifts, or using them entirely for their own pleasure. This is the very essence of sin—

the refusal of the part to subordinate itself to the whole. The musician sets himself up against the orchestra; the soldier against the army; the ego against the all. You cannot safely make sun, moon, and stars revolve around you, or tie the Milky Way to the tail of your kite. Yet this is the falsehood, the folly, the insanity, of sin. The self must die to live, or it will live only to die.

God would cure us of this insanity, by showing us an example of its opposite. Since we live, move, and have our being in him, he is, in a certain sense, the whole. Yet he cares for each part, however insignificant, pours into it his own life, sacrifices himself to save it. The love of God in Christ is the perfect realization of the ideal: "From each, according to ability; to each, according to need." The petty creature, who thought to ape the Godhead, sees the Godhead devoting itself to his restoration, and submitting itself even to death on his behalf. The greatest becomes servant to the least; the least finds his true place as servant to the greatest. From Christ's example the Christian learns to live for the whole, and not for the part; for God and for others, and not for self. When we thus join ourselves to Christ, we find that all things are ours, and that all things work together for our good.

93. I WILL MANIFEST MYSELF

This promise of Jesus has been greatly misinterpreted, and misinterpretation has often led to sad results. Our Lord has been thought to assure his followers of physical manifestations to their organs of sight and hearing; Christians have looked for supernatural visions and voices; imagination has sometimes furnished these, and believers have become unduly exalted; when these visions and voices have failed, these same believers have become skeptics. Satan, according to Scripture, has such false wonders at his command, and by their means he has led many an earnest disciple into error and even into sin.

The antidote to such mistakes is found in our Lord's promise of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is to be no longer with us in a physical way, as he was while here in the flesh. He tells us that he will come to us, but also that he will come by his Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit never appears *to* us, but only *in* us. We learn of his presence, and so of the presence of Christ, only from the quickening of our own powers, and from the new insight, affection, and energy which he imparts. When we pray for a manifestation of Christ, we are answered by a deeper sense of our own sinfulness, by a clearer understanding of his truth, by a warmer love for others, by a greater readiness to give, to act, to suffer, for his cause, but not by any impact from without upon our physical being.

Some of the noblest of Christ's servants have mourned because they were denied such manifestations of the Saviour's presence as others fancied themselves to have received. President Francis Wayland, of Brown University, could never testify to any such reception, and he came very wisely to believe that physical manifestation is no part of our Lord's promise. It may quiet many an unimaginative mind to know that visions and voices are not essential to the highest Christian experience, and that they are wholly untrustworthy evidences of a spiritual state. Satan can easily counterfeit them, and we must "try the spirits, whether they be of God." The only trustworthy manifestations of Christ are the new comprehension of truth, the new ardor of affection, the new energy of will, which are beyond our own unaided powers, and which prove themselves by this very fact to be the result of the indwelling and inspiration of his Holy Spirit.

I do not doubt that Christ can manifest himself to our outward senses, and that he did so manifest himself to Paul on the way to Damascus. But we do not live in the day of miracles; we live under the dispensation of the Spirit. It was expedient for us that Christ should go away, because this spiritual manifestation is of a higher sort than one that is merely physical. Let us only recognize in the Holy Spirit the omnipresent Christ, and his working within us will prove itself to be the fulfilment of his promise: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him."

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
  Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,
  And make me love thee as I ought to love.

I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,
  No sudden rending of the veil of clay,
No angel visitant, no opening skies;
  But take the dimness of my soul away.

94. POINTS OF DOCTRINE

The church has been criticized for unduly magnifying minute differences of doctrine. Arius has been said to differ from Athanasius only by a single diphthong. That diphthong, however, was a denial of Christ's deity, and *homoiousios* was condemned, while *homo-ousios* was approved as essential to Christian faith. Christ is not of *like* substance, but of the *same* substance, with the Father; and he is therefore very God of very God, with all the attributes and all the powers of deity.

An equally important controversy is that with regard to the addition of *filioque* to the Nicene Creed. The Western Church rightly maintains that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son; while the Eastern Church claims that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father. This is not a merely metaphysical and speculative difference; the truth involved is both scriptural and practical. If the fourth Gospel tells us that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, it also declares that Jesus will send him, and the Epistle to the Romans calls the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of Christ." The Western Church defends the doctrine that the Holy Spirit is not merely the third person of the Trinity, but also the Spirit of the incarnate Christ; and that in the Holy Spirit we have Christ himself, possessed of a human soul and touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but spiritualized,

exalted, omnipresent, omnipotent—in short, "Immanuel, God with us."

In the working of the Holy Spirit, the early church recognized the presence of Christ himself. When Paul and his helpers "assayed to go into Bithynia, the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not"; and the prophets of old "searched what time . . . the Spirit of Christ did point unto." When Jesus prayed that the love with which the Father loved the Son might be the animating love of the disciples, he interpreted his own words by saying, "I in them, and thou in me." When "the love of Christ constraineth us," the apostle means, not our love to Christ, nor Christ's love to us, but Christ's love overflowing into us and taking possession of us, by his own personal indwelling in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit brings into the life of every Christian the suffering Saviour, yet the Saviour freed from all limitations of space and time, and able to save to the uttermost. Our God has not only become man, but in the Holy Spirit his humanity has become a part of ourselves, to energize, recreate, and sanctify. The actual possession of a present Christ is the guarantee of our future continuance in well-doing, and of our final victory. For "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus shall give life also to your mortal bodies. through (or, because of) his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

95. GOD'S WORD POWERFUL

THE angel Gabriel concluded his message to Mary, at the annunciation, by saying, "For no word from God shall be void of power." The message must have cheered the Virgin, and it may cheer us also. The "word from God" is not the outward record alone, but the vital and vitalizing truth which the record contains. That word "shall not return unto me void," says God himself; "it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

God never utters jests or speaks at random. His least word is a manifestation of his energy and life. Like a ray of sunlight which can be traced back to the sun, every truth, however seemingly insignificant, can be traced back to God, and is a revelation of his very being. "Heaven and earth," says Christ, "shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Because God's word manifests God, "no word from God shall be void of power."

The least word of God is part of a system of truth. "The doctrines of theology," said Andrew Fuller, "are united together like chain-shot, so that, whichever enters the heart, the others must certainly follow." Because God is one, his law is one; and "he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all." The demand of love is the substance of all the commandments; and "whosoever shall break one of these least

commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven." Because the least word of God is part of a system of truth, "no word from God shall be void of power."

God is not only the source of truth, but he is personally present in his truth. As he is present in every molecule of his universe, so he is present in every word that has gone forth from his mouth. The external word indeed is only the expression of the immanent Word, who is Christ. To receive that word is to receive him, and to reject that word is to reject him. When that word is received and obeyed, even among the heathen, Christ is received, and the word becomes the power of God unto salvation. "No word from God shall be void of power," because Christ, the eternal Word, is ever with and in his written and uttered word, to make it effective.

Let us cherish the least suggestion of truth; value our own impressions as to the meanings of Scripture; give confidently to others what the Holy Spirit has given to us. What moves us will move others. Our utterances will not be in vain. The seed sown may be hidden long; but the harvest-time will surely come. "Light is *sown* for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart." We may die without seeing the fruit of our labor; but "the word of the Lord abideth forever." And the great harvest-day will reveal fruit that we knew not of. Like the snowballs which the boys roll up in the early spring, our works shall follow us, their results ever widening and enlarging, until we say, "Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee?" So no word from God shall be void of power.

96. A JEALOUS GOD

THERE is a passage in the Epistle of James which has some varieties of reading, and which has much perplexed commentators. I refer to the fifth verse of the fourth chapter. I cannot review the various interpretations, but you will find in the margin of our American Revised version, that one which I believe to be correct, because it best agrees with the context and has the greatest depth of meaning. I am convinced that textual criticism itself gives us the true reading, and that it is this: "That Spirit which he made to dwell in us yearneth for us even unto jealous envy." In the words of another: "The passage tells of the love of the Holy Spirit, and witnesses to the truth that the third person of the Holy Trinity abides in our hearts, striving to acquire the same love for him on our part which he bears for us."

James has been saying that the "friendship of the world is enmity with God," and that "whosoever would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." He appeals to his readers: "Think ye that the Scripture speaketh in vain?" All who have read intelligently know that God suffers no rivalry; no man can serve both God and Mammon; God requires nothing less than the absolute and total allegiance of the heart; and this the author expresses in the words: "That Spirit which he made to dwell in us yearneth for us even unto jealous envy."

The jealousy of God is the jealousy of love. It is not the emotion of a suspicious and capricious being, but the rational desire of infinite wisdom to make us wise; of infinite purity to make us pure; of infinite blessedness to make us blest. It proceeds from the great heart of God, which longs for companionship, not for his sake but for ours, that we may rest in his love, and find our highest exaltation in communion with himself. God is jealous of competitors, because he knows that they are our deception and our ruin. And so he longs to have us wholly devoted to himself, or rather, to love all others only in him and for his sake.

How that yearning of the Almighty should affect our hearts! Truly, "deep calleth unto deep"—the deep of God's boundless affection to the deep of our finite need. We know what the love of one man is to one woman; and we know that nothing but monogamy is true marriage. And sin is adultery, the departure of wife from husband, or of husband from wife, and the choice of foulness and disgrace instead of true affection. God would win us back, by protestation of his own love for us, shown in the giving of his Son to die, and in the pleading of his gracious Spirit. Since he "yearns for us even unto jealous envy," let us return to him, and love him with all our heart.

97. SANCTIFYING OURSELVES

THAT is a great word of Jesus in his intercessory prayer, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." How could he who was "holy, guileless, undefiled" speak of being sanctified? Certainly not in the sense that he had sin that needed to be removed. His sanctification must have been simply a setting apart, a surrender of perfectly lawful activities, a consecration to labor and pain, that we might be redeemed. And is not sanctification the work of God? How then can Jesus speak of sanctifying himself? Ah, we must remember that God never works alone in sanctification: we must "work out our own salvation," even while "he worketh in us, both to will and to work, according to his good pleasure."

So Jesus' utterance sets before us the long strain and struggle of his life, and the heroic courage and endurance which was necessary to bring him off victorious. More careful than any Nazirite not to defile himself, more patient and untiring than any contestant in the Olympic Games, more temperate and watchful than any general on whom depends the safety of an army or an empire, Jesus withstood temptation, and pushed on through Gethsemane and Calvary, till the goal was won, and he could cry, "It is finished!" Paul urges us to fight the good fight—"the beautiful fight"—of faith and sacrifice; but the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews can incite us to the effort in no better way

than by saying: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus."

Every man who wins great success must pay the price. The preparation of the artist or the physician is an up-hill climb. The business man does not commonly attain to fortune by leaps and bounds. Hard work at the start qualifies the manager of a great railway for his control. Many tastes must be given up, and many ambitions sacrificed. Palissy fed his furnace with the woodwork of his house, before he learned the secret of firing porcelain. Henry Ward Beecher could not preach well on Sunday unless he began to be abstemious on Friday. And the great leaders of the Christian world have given up all hope of wealth and honor in order that they might, like Luther, reform the church, or, like Livingstone, carry the gospel to the Dark Continent. These men sanctified themselves, that others might be sanctified in truth.

Let us not fail to apply Christ's principle to ourselves. We too are to sanctify ourselves for the sake of others. Have you never seen a father who loved wine and tobacco, but who gave them up for fear of their influence upon his growing boys? Have you never hesitated long before speaking to a man about his soul, only to find that when the hard duty was done, he yielded, and his conversion was followed by a score of others? Have you never known a church-member who feared to lift up his voice in a meeting for prayer, but whose breaking his guilty silence brought him into special nearness to Christ and opened to him a wide door of influence over others? These are little ways in which Christians may

sanctify themselves, that others may be sanctified also. But such little decisions have been the beginnings of great revivals of religion and of epoch-making lives.

"Sanctify them in thy truth: thy word is truth," says Jesus. God's holy word is the "sword of the Spirit"; and we are to find in it his appointed agency for eradicating sin and for securing victory over every foe. God must sanctify us—that is *his* part; but we are also to sanctify ourselves by the surrender of every known sin, and by the taking up of every neglected duty—that is *our* part in the work of salvation.

98. ENERGETIC PRAYER

Our Revised version dilutes a great text, when it translates the words of James: "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." In my judgment it should read: "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much when it is energetic." The word "effectual," in the Authorized version, was incorrect, because it called attention to the result; "energetic" is correct, because it calls attention to the means, and so, includes the element of "fervency," which the old version expresses. The text does not enjoin loudness of utterance nor agony of soul; but it does imply, negatively, that without earnestness and purpose, prayer will be much speaking and little meaning; and it does teach, positively, that true prayer is an active exercise of mind and heart and will, which avails much.

"Pray hardest, when it is hardest to pray," says Bishop Brent. Prayer is hardest at its beginning. It is hard to realize our need, to collect our thoughts, to summon up our energies, for prayer. Our chief difficulty is at the start. Let us learn a lesson from the bird. The bird must flap its wings at first, and struggle upward; but after a little it is borne upon the breeze, and it soars. The aeroplane too must first overcome inertia; then the machine, that is itself heavier than air, actually floats. So in prayer, it takes an effort of will, at the beginning, to lift us up from low ground to heights

of vision; but, in the end, we soar in our normal atmosphere of communion with God.

How much effort is required in energetic prayer? That depends on our outward circumstances and on our inward state. Sometimes it will require an agonizing struggle, as in the case of our Lord, when "with strong crying and tears" he "offered up prayers and supplication unto him who was able to save him from death." But we read of only one such struggle in Jesus' life, and that struggle was endured that we might "draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace." Only so much effort is required as will bring us into touch with God, will visualize the things we long for, and will enable us to say, "Thy will be done." In a burning building I may well rush to the window, to open it and escape the smoke; but ordinarily, I open the window quietly. God is all about us, like the air; we need only the opening of the heart, and he will enter in. Energetic prayer, in fact, is only the intense determination no longer to keep God out, but to admit him as absolute Ruler of our souls.

How much time is required for energetic prayer? Scripture gives us some striking answers. Nehemiah's prayer to the God of heaven was a mere ejaculation; but it was rewarded by the king's decree to build the walls of Jerusalem. Peter's cry, "Lord, save, or I perish!" was very brief; but Jesus put forth his hand, and rescued him. "Prayer and provender never hindered a journey," said Luther. You would not think of setting out on a journey without your breakfast; do you go into an examination without prayer? When you feel your need least, then you need prayer most.

When there is little interest in the prayer meetings, then increase their number. When the Syro-phœnician woman received Jesus' rebuff, she would have made a great mistake to discontinue her supplications. There is a rustic phrase which we may make use of: you know what it is to "wait upon" a young lady; do you so "wait upon" God? Energetic prayer may be either short or long. But it has one characteristic: it holds on, until its faith becomes sight. For praying breath was never spent in vain.

99. THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

In the book of Revelation we read of "an angel flying in mid-heaven, having eternal good tidings." The angel is moving, but in his hand is something that does not move, something that is constant, changeless, invariable—"the everlasting gospel" of God's redemption. We have here the two aspects of theological science—stability and progress. The great objective facts do not change; but there is a better understanding of these facts with every passing year. Religion is in this respect like astronomy: we do not expect any new worlds, and we need not expect any new Scriptures; but we may expect progress in the interpretation of both. In truth, a theology that makes no progress has no strong hold of the fundamentals of religion.

The conservative has always been afraid of the radical, but without good reason. Both of them represent natural tendencies of the human mind. The apostle John, in his second epistle, recognizes both: "Whoso goeth onward," he says, "and abideth not in the teaching of the Christ, hath not God." David Smith remarks: "The apostle does not condemn theological progress—he defines its limits. He means that we must never break with the past. New truth is always an outgrowth of the old. We must maintain the teaching of Christ. No interpretation of Christianity is true which eliminates redemption, or obscures the glory of the Cross." Yet the apostle

approves of "going onward," and would have us "bring out of our treasure things new, as well as old."

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in like manner, looks forward to great shakings of belief: yet regards "the removing of those things that are shaken" as taking place, only "that those things that are not shaken may remain." These words were spoken primarily of the abolition of the Jewish dispensation. To the Hebrews, the destruction of Jerusalem seemed like the end of the world. Things were shaken indeed; but Christ and his truth still remained. To many good Catholics, the Reformation seemed like the end of the world; for the infallibility of the church went the way of all the earth, and all authority seemed destroyed. But Christ and his truth still remained.

The Bible took the place of the church. And now that old views of its origin and inspiration have been modified, many excellent Christians fear that the foundations will be removed. But no, Christ is the only foundation; and Christ and his truth still remain. The church rests, not upon a creed, but upon Christ. Its foundation is not a formula, but a person; and so long as we, with Peter, confess him to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God," the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church.

What remains unshaken is Christ himself, as he is described in Scripture, Christ's deity, preexistence, incarnation, virgin birth, miracles, atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension, judgeship, omnipresence with his people—these are the things that remain, and that will remain forever. Christ shook the earth at Sinai, and he will shake it many times again, until at last he

" makes all things new." But he is " the same, yesterday, and to-day, and forever." " Heaven and earth will pass away," but his " words shall not pass away." The angel will fly from shore to shore, and from age to age; but the message which he bears will always be " the everlasting gospel."

100. GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

I SUPPOSE this is the last meeting I shall have the privilege of attending. In spite of my desire for rest and freedom from responsibility, the breaking of these associations is a sort of wrench to me. I shall miss this gathering for prayer as much as anything connected with the Seminary life. This place has often been to me the house of God and the gate of heaven, and I have always felt its great importance in our educational work.

I look forward, not with anxiety about the future, but with wonder as to what will come to me. The hymn we sang at the beginning of this meeting gives me comfort:

> The King of love my Shepherd is,
> Whose goodness faileth never;
> I nothing lack if I am his,
> And he is mine forever.

That is a great hymn, because it is a metrical version of the Twenty-third Psalm. How wonderful it is that, a thousand years before Christ, when the darkness of paganism encompassed the whole earth, in that little land of Palestine the true light was shining, and there was at least one man who recognized the presence and love of God! That is one of the best proofs of divine inspiration.

The opening phrase of that hymn, "The King of love," unites two great ideas of Christianity. God is

a sovereign, but not an arbitrary sovereign. He is a God of love, a King who rules in the interests of his subjects, and who has a personal regard for every one who trusts him. It is that God in whom I trust.

I look back to the beginning of my Christian life, just fifty-six years ago, when for the first time I surrendered myself to God. I said then: "I give myself to thee; henceforth I live for thee; I put my future in thy hands." I wish to-day to utter my testimony that the Lord has been faithful to his promises. No word of God has been void of power. Goodness and mercy have followed me, all the days of my life. I wonder at the mercy of God when I think of my shortcomings; and that past mercy of God, in spite of my unworthiness, is the best assurance I have, aside from his word of promise, that he will never leave me nor forsake me, and that, whatever comes to me in the future, all things will work together for my good.

I lay down my work here with great affection for both faculty and students, with great interest in the future prosperity of the Seminary, and with great confidence that the God who directed the founding of this institution sixty years ago will not forsake the work of his hands, but will make this school of the prophets a nursery of the church and a birthplace of souls. Though I feel many pangs of regret at severing my connection with the institution, I rejoice that what a single individual cannot do, because his life is so short, God can do through him and after him. To serve a great institution is far better than to serve one's own narrow interests in the world. Organization multiplies individual activities and unites them, so that

Christian influence lives on, and marches forward to the conquest of the world.

I have great hopes for the future. I ask the blessing of God upon the Rochester Theological Seminary, its trustees, its faculty, and its students, both present and to come. The Lord be merciful to us and bless us; the Lord make his face to shine upon us; the Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace!

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